

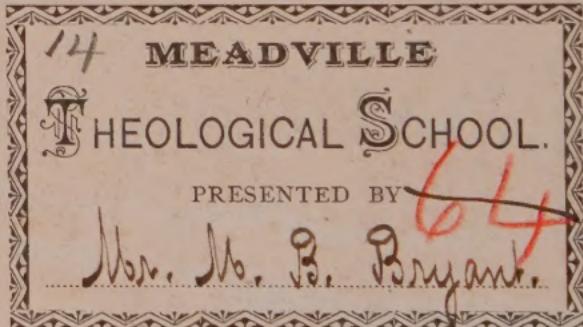
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1881.

SOME ASPECTS OF RELIGION.

BY

JOHN W. CHADWICK.

"Non, nous n'avons plus affaire à la mort, mais à la vie."—GEORGE SAND.



JAMES MILLER, PUBLISHER,

779 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

1870.

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ALUMNAE

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SIMPLICITY OF TRUE RELIGION.

FROM various wanderings to and fro in search of rest from ordinary cares or change from ordinary pleasures, bringing, I trust, some deeper sense of the abounding mystery which everywhere environs us, some added strength for tasks that lie in wait for us at every turn, some keener zest for life's unfailing joys, we have come back to-day* to this dear place, to witness once again to our abiding faith in that which was the inspiration of the men who built it here beside the streaming tides of our habitual life; namely, the power and beauty of Religion. For any who have not this faith, this is no place to come save as they come in hopes of finding it, and rejoicing with us in its unspeakable good—a good which they have never consciously enjoyed or which the average presentation of religion has compelled them to forego; even, perhaps, to doubt the existence of it altogether. All such are welcome here,

* September 16, 1877.

if haply they may feel the joy unfelt before, or suffering from some terrible eclipse. Only let no one doubt, if it comes not to him or returns not, that there is such a joy, such an unspeakable good. Because I cannot speak of it aright, pressing it home on his conviction with unerring skill, it does not follow that it is not a fact, the one great fact of life. Let him be patient, and ere long some one shall speak to him according to his need, saying what I *would* say if I had but the gift. And did I say, This is no place for any who have not this faith for which we stand, save as they hope to win it or recover it by coming here, I hasten to unsay it. All, all are welcome, even those who think so meanly of us as to believe that we are hostile to religion, whether because of this belief they think well or ill of us. Shame on us if we cannot convince them, orthodox or heterodox, that in nothing else do we believe so much as in the power and beauty of religion; that for nothing else are we so anxious as to spread abroad this faith, that if we lay apparently irreverent hands on this or that which some consider venerable, it is only because we would put something far more venerable in the place of it. To none in this community, or any other, Protestant or Catholic, do we subordinate our interest in religious matters, our conviction that religion is the supreme interest of human life. Low is our roof and narrow are our walls and few our company. But not St. Peter's stands and witnesses to a more earnest faith than ours in the importance of religion, and not to all the millions whose eyes are

turned to the adjoining Vatican as to the shrine of an incarnate deity do we allow a faith more deep and wide, more rich and full, more satisfying and consoling and inspiring than our own.

I know that there are those who think, or think they think, that religion is a matter of the past; that it has seen its best days and is now seeing its worst, the days of its humiliation and decay; unless they should prefer to call the days of its power and triumph its worst days, worst for mankind, and these its best because well-nigh its last. But even these would not be able to deny that in the past the religious life of man has been his most conspicuous and important interest. Religion has been the most engrossing theme of the historian; it has built the grandest buildings, written the most precious books, furnished the most illustrious men, inaugurated the most important changes in society, controlled the most far-reaching movements of mankind. Granted that there is here no argument for the continuance of any special form of religion, is there not for the continuance of religion itself? This and that belief or form may pass away, but that in the future there will be something corresponding to the religious interests and enthusiasm of the past is a conclusion difficult to avoid. Something essential to humanity there must be in that which has been so vast, so multiform, so universal, so far-dating in its manifestations. To imagine the cessation of the family or state, or of any natural function, would not be much, if any, more extravagant than to imagine the cessation of religion.

Nothing more natural than religion; nothing more inevitable; nothing more universal. But I am pledged to speak of its simplicity. Yes, but of the simplicity of *true* religion. Do not imagine that by true religion I mean Unitarianism or Rationalism. I mean the essential quality of all religions, orthodox and heterodox, Jewish and Christian and Mohammedan, Buddhistic and Brahmanical. No one of these is true religion to the exclusion of the rest, but there is true religion at the heart of each and every one of them. It is of this true religion that I predicate simplicity; not of the manifestations of religious life; not of the problems theological and ontological which are connected with it; not of the divine nature, nor of evolution and creation, nor of the duties which are the fit response of men to the everlasting faithfulness of God. The manifestations of religion are not simple. They are very far from being so. They are exceedingly complex. The homeliest illustration is sufficient proof of this. From such or such a hill the country people tell you that you can see fifty or a hundred steeples. I always wish I could not see so many. They do not point to heaven so clearly as to the complexity of the manifestations of religion. The more steeples does not mean the more religion, but the more theology, the more dogmatism. They do not mean more love but more of hate. Yes, the manifestations of religion are exceedingly complex. There are the great religions of the world, Christianity and Buddhism and Brahmanism and Islam, and each of these is subdivided many

times. "In America," said Talleyrand, "they have a hundred religions and only one soup." In England, the number of sectarian divisions is still greater. And almost every one of these divisions considers itself as the sole defence and representative of true religion. How dreadful it would be if it were really so! If all except the Sandemanians or Dunkers, or even if all except the Protestants or Romanists or Christians were hopelessly immersed in false religion! It seems to me that if I believed any such stuff as this, I should want to belong to one of the biggest sects; that I would rather be damned with many than be saved with an infinitesimal minority. But I do not and cannot believe it. I believe that true religion may consist with the most different beliefs and forms; that many a Trinitarian has more true religion than many Unitarians, that many a Romanist has more true religion than many Protestants; that many a Mohammedan or Buddhist has more true religion than many Christians.

By the simplicity of religion, then, I do not mean either that the manifestations of the religious life are simple, or that it is a simple thing to judge between the different religions of the world as true or not true in the mass. I would advise any enthusiastic Christian who believes that Buddhism, for example, only differs from Christianity as false from true, evil from good, to read an article in a recent number of the *North American Review*, written in broken English, by a Japanese traveller—a series of reflections on our national religion and morality. They are by no

means flattering, far less so in fact than the most candid estimate of Japanese religion and morality that I have ever heard from Christian lips, and yet, it seems to me, they constitute an indictment which it would be very hard to quash. To affirm the simplicity of religion is not then, I repeat, to affirm either the simplicity of its manifestations, or the simplicity of distinguishing one form of religion from all others as true from false. And no more is it to affirm the simplicity of the problems theological and ontological, problems of the divine nature, of man's origin and destiny, of the world's creation, of the relations of matter and spirit, which have so largely engrossed the time and thought of the religious world. To be used, as these problems are used, as touchstones of salvation, to test by them the quality of men's religiousness, to declare, If you think so and so about these awful things, then you are saved, but if not, you are damned to all eternity, these problems should be exceedingly simple. And so too, if it be necessary to salvation—or, since this word is damaged phraseology, let us say man's highest good—to believe thus and so about the nature of Jesus, or about the inspiration of the Bible, it ought to be a very simple matter to decide exactly what is true concerning these important matters. But it is very far from being so. They involve the nicest literary studies. Even supposing that the New Testament taught explicitly in every chapter that the man Jesus was the infinite God, instead of having only a few scattered texts that can be tortured into this confession, this would only

be a single step in the direction of a legitimate conviction of the deity of Christ. It would remain to find out when, and by whom, the different books of the New Testament were written, and whether they were written by such persons, and under such circumstances, that every thing contained in them can be regarded as infallibly true. Much the same questions are involved in the problem of Biblical inspiration. And so it happens that these problems, on which the fate of millions is so lightly made to balance, are as far as possible from being simple, and therefore, that if true religion can, without sarcasm, be spoken of as simple, it can not involve the decision of these problems one way or the other. That they are very interesting problems, very fascinating, very important, I do not deny, but that they are simple, only an ignoramus can affirm, and that the essential quality of a man's religion can depend on their solution is an unqualified absurdity.

But all the greater then must be the folly of supposing that the essential quality of a man's religion can depend on his solution of the higher problems of theology and anthropology, the divine nature and the human, the relations of spirit and matter, God and the universe. Concerning these things, also, the theologians and sectaries are exceedingly garrulous and dogmatic. What they do not know about them is not worth knowing. This and that is true, and this and that you must believe, or the most dreadful things will happen. But these, again, are very difficult problems, the most difficult a man can grapple

with. The bravest intellect may well be dizzied and appalled by their precipitous and frowning wall, such as no Bald-cap or Chocorua ever set against the nerve of the adventurous mountaineer. Either the essential quality of religion is not simple, or these are not involved in it. Honor to those who love to brace themselves against their beetling crags, and penetrate their dark ravines, and stand upon their cloud-enveloped tops; but the highway of the religious life, though never losing sight of these sky-reaching domes and pinnacles of thought, winds far below them in the valleys, skirting their bases that take hold upon the inmost heart of things. To affirm the simplicity of true religion, is not to affirm the simplicity of man's nature or God's nature; of creation or evolution; of matter or of spirit, or their mutual relations. Rather is it to affirm that these things can never be essential factors in the true religion of humanity, because they are so complex and so difficult. So long as man is man, he will accept their challenge to his curiosity. And well he may, so long as he does not endeavor to make the conclusions of his intellect the standards of men's highest good.

And yet, again, to affirm the simplicity of religion is not to affirm that the problems of duty are always simple in their nature; that it is always easy to know what is the right thing to do. Granted that of all wrong-doing the most is the result, not of an erring intellect, but of a slothful or malicious disposition; granted that men's judgment would be much oftener just if they

sought not their own will ; the fact remains that oftentimes we do not know the thing we ought to do. What nicely conscientious person will not confess that many times a week, and sometimes more than once a day, in the management of his social relations and his domestic responsibilities, he is in doubt between different and well-nigh opposing courses of action ? " I am quite sure," we frequently soliloquize, " that if I knew just what I ought to do, though it were very hard indeed, I would not hesitate to do it." But we do not always know. We know better and better with every resolute attempt to do the thing which seems most right to us. But let us seek the light, and follow it ever so faithfully, and very often we shall find ourselves in a strait betwixt two ; sometimes a very painful one. Therefore, I say, that if to predicate simplicity of true religion were to affirm that duty is a simple matter, easy to know, however hard to do, we could not predicate simplicity of true religion.

But by this process of exclusion are we not gradually letting ourselves down to the conviction that true religion is not much of any thing ? It is not this or that religion as distinct from all the rest. It is not any system of theology or Christology. It is not any special moral code. The moral codes of men, their schemes of duty and self-sacrifice, have varied much with the successive generations of mankind, and with its geographical distribution, But true religion, I am bound to think, has co-existed with these various codes. Yea, verily, because, wherever man is

and the universe, there is the possibility of true religion; there is religion natural as the unfevered beating of our hearts. *The essence of religion is man's sense of his relation to the universe, and his endeavor somehow to convert this sense into a binding law of life.* Given this sense and this endeavor, and I affirm that we have true religion, and it is of true religion thus compounded that I predicate simplicity. And this I am persuaded is no definition of religion by the inferior limit; as if one should define a mountain as an excrescence on the earth's surface, or a man as a two-legged animal. The highest manifestation of religion that has ever glorified the world, has in its finest essence been no more than this: man's sense of his relation to the universe, and his endeavor somehow to convert this sense into a binding law of life. As the human heart is always full and never over-filled, so is the heart of true religion filled with this sense and this endeavor, manifested in the

“Shy yearnings of the savage,
Unfolding thought by thought,”

and yet not over-filled by the same sense and endeavor manifested in the life and death of him whom we are wont to call the man of men.

Should any ask, But wherein is the good or satisfaction of a definition of religion that is so inclusive? my answer is at hand. The satisfaction is that we are herewith furnished with a basis for the sympathy of all religions, not merely of “The ten great religions of the world,” which are still far enough from exhausting the total manifestation of

religion in all ages and all lands. There may be those who do not care for such a satisfaction ; to whom such a basis is not a desideratum. These may prefer the Pharisaic prayer, I thank thee, O God, that I am not as other men are ; but for myself, I can not but rejoice in every thing that binds the highest and the lowest offspring of mankind into one family, so that the bond be noble and exalting. This is the satisfaction then of having such an inclusive definition of religion, and the good of it is that it is a check upon our folly in reading out this or that other body of people from the religious world. Here are three or four hundred million Buddhists, for example, who, it is said, do not believe in personal immortality, neither in a personal God, and so Buddhism is not a religion. Granting so much, the next thing to do would be to affirm that if Buddhism is not a religion, there is something else in the world almost or quite as good as a religion. But for my part, I should be very sorry to have Buddhism left out from the great family of religions. I would rather spare Mohammedanism, whose faith in both a personal God and personal immortality is of the strongest, and even several forms of modern Christianity. And this no less were it quite true that Buddhism is the denial of both a personal God and personal immortality. But that it is this in its more modern manifestations there seems abundant reason to deny. And strangely enough, when it was this much more than it is now, it was a much more wonderful and beautiful manifestation of the religious life of man. Not that the absence of belief

in any personal God or any personal immortality made it so, but that the absence of these beliefs, which to the great majority of us are so exceedingly precious, did not prevent a wonderful and beautiful manifestation of the religious life; at any rate, of what I choose to call so, because it carried along with it a very grand and awful sense of man's relation to the universe, and because there was a very strong and beautiful endeavor to convert this sense into a binding law of life. And as the absence of those great beliefs which many seem to think are absolutely essential to religion, did not prevent a very wonderful and beautiful manifestation of the religious life, so in later times the introduction of these beliefs or their equivalents into Buddhism has not prevented it from running out into all sorts of fanciful excesses. What then shall we conclude, if not that whatever validity there is in the two great doctrines of a personal God and personal immortality, they are not the most important factors in the religious life of man, seeing that without them there *may* be a much more satisfactory manifestation of religion than with them.

I think we do not have to go to India or China for illustrations of the truth of this position. I think we all of us know men and women who without these beliefs have more of true religion than some men and women who have never for a moment doubted them, because they have a deeper, fuller sense of their relation to the universe, and because they endeavor to convert this sense into a binding law of life, and not without success.

You will not understand me in any thing that I have said as trying to weaken in the least degree your faith in either of the great objects of belief of which I have been speaking, nor as expressing any doubt on my own part in regard to them. You will bear me witness that concerning the mysteries of the Godhead, I have never been dogmatic. Questions of personality or impersonality I have never meddled with, though it has always seemed to me much more legitimate to affirm than to deny the personality of God. Does he think? Nay, rather he is Thought. Does he reason? Nay, rather he is Reason. Does he love? Nay, rather he is Love. And are not reason, thought, and love essential personality? And yet, more sure of God's existence, I could almost say, than of my own, and trusting him with deeper trust than I can fathom with my understanding, the words of Goethe are to me a constant admonition :

Him who dare name and yet proclaim,
Yes, I believe ?
Who that can feel his heart can steel
To say, I disbelieve ?

There is more wisdom in this brief antithesis, it seems to me, than in whole bodies of divinity.

As with my faith in God so with my faith in personal immortality. It far outruns all logical procedures. These vaguely justify it to my reason ; but when the wise and good are taken from the earth, and most of all, when they are taken from my side, I cannot make them dead. *Three weeks*

ago, I chatted with a precious friend* who seemed as full of life as ever any summer day was full of pleasantness. *Two* weeks ago, I stood beside his open grave, and saw him tenderly let down into its dark abyss. Him? No, I cannot believe it. Somewhere, I must believe, that mind so clear, that wit so keen, that conscience so alive, that love so great, are treasured up against another day.

“Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside,
And I shall know him when we meet.”

So it has ever seemed to me, and such has been the burden of my preaching in this place. But it has never seemed to me, at least for many years, that the fate of all religion is bound up with either one or both of these beliefs. Harriet Martineau had neither of these great beliefs; but hers, it seems to me, was a profoundly religious nature and an exceedingly religious life. For what an awe-inspired and reverent and tender sense she had of her relation to the universe, and how grandly she converted it into the binding law of all her intellectual activity! Shall we say that there is no religious significance in the work which Mr. Felix Adler is doing over in New York because, as I understand it, he has no faith in any personal God or personal immortality? Let those who can, but I have neither power nor disposition. For without these beliefs, much as they are to me, I cannot help feeling that there is a hundred times

* Rev. Thomas J. Mumford.

as much religious significance in his work as in that of the great revivalists who count him utterly accursed, so much more deep and reverent than theirs is his sense of our relation to the universe, and so brave is his endeavor to convert this sense into a binding law of life for individuals and states.

Such are the satisfaction and the good I find in my belief in the simplicity of true religion : the satisfaction of a sympathy with all religions, even the lowest in the scale ; the good of recognizing that there may be a really beautiful and glorious manifestation of religion even where there is the most conspicuous lack of certain doctrinal beliefs of vital interest to the majority of earnest men. But to affirm that the essential quality of true religion is independent of those doctrines without which so many think religion quite impossible is not by any means to affirm that true religion is simple in the sense of being all of one sort. From the untutored savage up to the filial heart of Jesus there is an almost infinite range of difference, though all within the bounds of true religion. Given the seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the appreciative mind, and, with each new insight into the make of things, the fashion of the world, the march of history, the mysteries of human life and love, the sense of our relation to the universe, and to the indwelling, infinite Life thereof, becomes more sweet and solemn, and more deep and full ; and more and more do we resolve and strive to bring our lives into harmonious relations with that great principle of order which enters into all things, and that great sweep of tendency which

carries all things on from good to better, and from better on to best.

Do you remember what a night of stars we had a little while ago? It seemed that every one in heaven was out, and shining at its best. How cheap, compared with that transcendent spectacle, the sum of all the miracles which men would fain believe to have occurred!

Plainness and clearness, without shadow of stain!
Clearness divine!

It seemed to me that it would be a dreadful thing to take a life in any way unworthy or impure into that evening's hush, into that light of multitudinous stars. In Thy light we see light; ay, and the darkness of our lives; the stains upon our spirits. Much more it seems to me would one who, looking up into those awful spaces, should know the law of their inviolate seclusions, star from star, feel it to be a law unto his spirit, and say, How dare I not obey the strong attraction central to soul as well as star? "The undevout astronomer is mad;" nor the unrighteous any less.

No, it is no miscalculation that affirms that true religion is a very simple thing. It is not conditioned by any theory of the divine nature, by any theory of human destiny, by any estimate of historical events that happened eighteen hundred years ago. It is to be impressed by the majestic order of the universe, to thrill with recognition of the tender grace and awful sweep of things, and to convert this passive recognition into a voluntary energy of devotion to the Eternal Power that

makes for righteousness, so that the man becomes a conscious fellow-laborer with God.

But to the end that this may be accomplished, what a gain is that conception of the universe which for the irruptions of an arbitrary will substitutes the operations of an invariable Law which is essential Reason and Beneficence. Henceforth the way is clear, the method plain, by which we can convert our passion of devotion into a binding law of life. No longer crying, Oh ! that thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down ! no longer waiting for some break in the established order of the world to attest the divine presence, this order itself becomes to us the voice of the Eternal, saying unto us, This do, and thou shalt live. Wherever we can read a law of physical or intellectual or moral life, a law of art or trade, a law of politics or social life, there is the way of life made plain to us ; the way by which we can convert the passion of our adoration in the presence of the abounding glory of the universe into a voluntary energy of self-control and self-development ; of self-surrender, too, at the behest of every cause that makes for human good.

“ Strong-builded world of ancient days,
Shown to me for a dwelling-place,
With heights and depths, and many a treasure,—
Come, I will count, and weigh, and measure,
And know you, house in which I live !
And what your chambers have to give :
And far more sure and far more swift
Shall be my use of every gift ;
From land to land, from age to age,
Larger shall grow my heritage.

“ And you, great over-bending roof !
You rolling lights that shine aloof
Forever,—I will know you too,
And why you shine and what you do :
And when I know your paths and ways,
That, too, shall help me through the days,
Across the seas and round the land,
As if God led me by the hand.

“ He leadeth me, he makes me care
For every pain his creatures bear !
I will arise and ask aloud
Of every pain that cries to God,
How it has come. And I shall know,
I shall, I shall,—God tells me so.
And many a pain shall pass away
Like darkness in the light of day.”

Amen ! Thus spake the soul of man
In every age since time began ;
And louder yet and clearer grows
That voice divine since first it rose :—
“ Wisdom and Love, not Wrath and Chance,
Showed me this fair inheritance ;
And till I know it as I ought,
I know not all they meant and thought
When first they showed my world to me,
Nor all that I was meant to be.”
Thou gracious voice ! go sounding on
Till all the inheritance be won !

William Brighty Rands.

THE RISING FAITH.

• • • —

NOW more than eighteen centuries have passed away since the prime article of the Christian creed was that Jesus would come again, and he has not yet come. Some of us think that there was never any reason to suppose he would ; that the belief was natural to the time, but as irrational as the contemporary belief that the Emperor Nero would come again, a belief explicitly maintained in the New Testament and common to the Roman world. As for the attempts to rationalize and spiritualize the second coming of Jesus, to make the belief and prophecy come true—all this has rested on the assumption that whatever is written in the New Testament must be true in one way or another, an assumption utterly groundless and absurd when we consider the anonymous character of the majority of the New Testament writings, and the uncritical and credulous character of the time when they appeared. To say the Bible must agree with history, or the Bible must agree with science, is to say that for which there is not a particle of warrant. There is no more reason why the Bible

should agree with history or science than why any other writing which appeared from 800 B.C. to 200 A.D. should do so. It but remains for us to say, in all simplicity, that those who, in the early church, expected the second coming of Jesus cherished a groundless expectation, and those who have endeavored since to rationalize that expectation have wasted mental energy which might better have been spent in making two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, or on any other common serviceable task.

Will the Son of Man, when he cometh, find faith on the earth?* For us the Son of Man is no historic individual, but the divine humanity which has been and which is and is to be. Son of Man it is and also Son of God, born of the perpetual union of the human and divine, the labors of innumerable generations, aided by the consenting force of the Supreme Desire and Purpose lodged in the heart of every atom and event. Will this Son of Man, at its coming, find faith on the earth? —faith in its own infinite heart? This is a momentous question; one that is being asked just now by many thoughtful men and answered variously; here hopefully and cheerfully; there with discouragement and gloom. I cannot think that the importance of the question has been overrated. Faith may be variously defined, but we shall all agree, I think, that without faith, as we understand it, life would be a very poor affair. "All the great ages," Emerson assures us, "have been

* Luke 18 : 8.

ages of faith." "I mean," he says, "when there was any extraordinary power of performance, when great national movements began, when arts appeared, when heroes existed, when poems were made, the human soul was in earnest, and had fixed its thought on spiritual verities with as strict a grasp as that of the hands on the sword, the pencil, or the trowel." But some sort of faith is necessary, not only to such great performance, but to the average health and comfort of the human world, and even to its perpetuity. If men haven't faith in this world, they must have it in some other ; if none in God, then some in Christ ; if none in life, as with the Buddhists, then some in death, not merely as a negative but as a positive good. Matthew Arnold has recently given wider currency to a dictum of Schopenhauer, the famous German pessimist, who is esteemed a great philosopher by those who think they know. "It is evident," says this great philosopher, "it is evident, even *a priori*, that the world is doomed to evil, and that it is the domain of irrationality. In abstinence from the further propagation of mankind is salvation. This would gradually bring about the extinction of our species, and with our extinction that of the universe, since the universe requires for its existence the coöperation of human thought." Allow his premises, and I see no escape from his conclusion. If the world is doomed to evil, if it is the abode of irrationality, if we can have no faith in it, then parentage is criminality, and "the desired of all nations" is a prophet who shall invent a scheme of universal suicide, and supply the

motives requisite to its accomplishment. Who knows but that some of us may live to see a society established "For the Annihilation of the Universe." That were a scheme to pique the dullest will to preternatural activity.

But there are those whose lack of faith is not so absolute as Schopenhauer's, who still have very little, and there are others who, not without faith themselves, or what they consider faith, find reason to believe that we are suffering from such a decline of faith as the world has never seen before, and that there is worse in store for us. A poet of this terrible conviction has expressed it in a poem of incomparable sadness. After describing the full tide upon the Dover beach, he says:

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled ;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.*

Now, is there truth in this as well as poetry? If there is, and if the faith, the loss of which is thus deplored, was real faith, faith in the real things, then are our lines fallen to us in any thing but pleasant places; then have we come into a region of thick darkness. But in the natural order for every ebbing tide there is a flood sooner or later. And even when the tide is out upon the rocks and beaches, the ocean is as full as ever. Only its waters, instead of lapping lazily along the shore

* *New Poems* by Matthew Arnold : "Dover Beach."

where vessels lie at anchor, are heaped up in mid-ocean, where the great ships career with every sail full-spread to catch the wind. May not the spiritual order be analogous to this? Granting there is an ebb of faith at present; may it not be the preparation for a coming flood that shall submerge the tallest steeples, and make in to arid places that have missed for many a day the freshening of the Lord? May not the great ocean of faith be just as full as ever? Though the tide be out where souls are anchored stem and stern, and rotting at their anchorage, may it not be full enough where other souls have plenty of sea-room, sailing an ocean which they trust no less because they cannot sound its depths of wonder?

However this may be, the ebb of faith is as conspicuous as any factor in our modern life. It is less conspicuous in America than in England, and less conspicuous in England than on the continent, but it is everywhere conspicuous.

The very movements that are cited by the faithful to appear upon their side, bear witness on the other. The great revivalists come into a great city. They came to Brooklyn, for example, eighteen months ago. They availed themselves of every possible discovery in the advertiser's art. The crowds were dangerous to life or limb. The mechanism was perfect. The talk was infinite. The husbands prayed for were innumerable, but *not* the wives. The tears should have been saved against a drought. And what did it amount to after all? The track of the revivalists was like a ship's track in the sea. In a week after they were

gone, they were almost forgotten. There were no converts to speak of. It was no "great awakening." It was a very little one, followed by slumber more profound than ever. But "in that sleep of death what dreams may come!" For Moody and Sankey say Edwards and Whitefield, and for 1876 say 1740. That *was* a great awakening. That was no ship's track in the sea. Think what they would have accomplished in a city of 500,000 souls. They would have turned it upside-down. There would have been a stricken one in every house. Ah! but, you say, the comparison is not fair. Moody and Sankey are not Edwards and Whitefield. No, they are not. But—and here is the main point—they are as near an approach to them as is possible in 1877. In 1740, Edwards, the first thinker in America, without a superior in Europe, if in the modern world, was an orthodox revivalist. That is to say, the best mind of the time was enlisted on the side of Calvinistic Christianity. Now it is very different. The Edwardses are Mills and Spencers. The Whitefields are impossible. For their spontaneity we have advertisements; for their genius, mechanism. Again, compare the subject-matter of the 19th century revivalist with that of the 18th. Moody is not sparing of "the blood," but it is thin as water in comparison with Whitefield's crimson flood. He is more sparing of the fire; repeating everywhere one famous sermon upon Hell. Compare that sermon with Jonathan Edwards's "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." It is as a foot-stove to Vesuvius on the day it buried Herculaneum.

But here in Boston is the Rev. Flavius Josephus Cook, the Monday lecturer, ready to show that Calvinism is in “the nature of things,” that evangelical Christianity is philosophical and scientific truth. So his great namesake, the original Flavius Josephus, tried to make it out that Judaism was identical with Greek philosophy. But he did not succeed. Nor will the modern reconciler any better. His trinity is not the orthodox trinity; his atonement is not the orthodox atonement. His reconciliations only satisfy the ignorant and those who merely care for triumph. They do not satisfy the honest and the wise. He is another sign of the receding tide; well out already to lay bare this “rope of sand.”

The appeal to reason is a sign that revelation is no longer a sufficient ground of faith. Cardinal Manning has written very recently: “Many who would shrink from affirming that reason is the sole fountain of truth, and that nothing is true which cannot be found in human consciousness or elicited from it, nevertheless maintain that reason is the measure of truth, and that nothing which is incomprehensible is credible. They therefore undertake to demonstrate the doctrines of the trinity and incarnation, which, when they have been reduced to the measure of reason, cease to be the doctrines of revelation.” Here is an unconscious but exact description of the Boston Monday lecturer. And Cardinal Manning continues: “This, especially in the last century, was the first momentum which carried many into unbelief of revelation altogether.” Let Mr. Cook and all who

pin their faith on him beware. For reason is that camel in the story whose head once in is followed soon by all the rest of his portentous bulk.

In his *Last Essays on Church and Religion*, Matthew Arnold, one of the most earnest and intelligent defenders, now living, of the Bible and Christianity, as he understands them, moreover one who is no terrorist, but who never puts the telescope to his blind eye, says: "The partisans of traditional religion in this country do not know, I think, how decisively the whole force of progressive and liberal opinion on the Continent has pronounced against the Christian religion. They do not know how surely the whole force of progressive and liberal opinion in this country (*i.e.*, in England) tends to follow, so far as traditional religion is concerned, the opinion of the Continent. They dream of patching up things unmendable, of retaining what can never be retained, of stopping change at a point where it can never be stopped. The undoubted tendency of liberal opinion is to reject the whole anthropomorphic and miraculous religion of tradition as unsound and untenable. On the Continent, such opinion has rejected it already. One cannot," he continues, "blame the rejection. 'Things are what they are,' and the religion of tradition, Catholic or Protestant, *is* unsound and untenable. A greater force of tradition in favor of religion is all which now prevents the liberal opinion of England from following the continental opinion. That force is not of a nature to be permanent, and it will not, in fact, hold out long."

For England, say America, and this is just about as true of us as of Mr. Arnold's fellow-countrymen. The partisans of traditional religion in this country realize even less than those of England how decisively the whole force of continental liberal opinion is opposed to their interpretation of the universe. They do not even realize to what an extent the liberal opinion of England and Scotland is divorced from and opposed to their interpretation, nor, for that matter, the liberal opinion of our own country. And where they do approximately, they flatter themselves that the liberalism of England and the Continent is not going to invade this country, just as the traditional religionists of England flatter themselves that the liberalism of the Continent is not going to invade England. But it has invaded it already. The scientific and the literary life of England has succumbed to it already. Its representatives are in the old Cathedral pulpits ; in the ancient university chairs. Their names are Stanley and Jowett, and others quite as significant. The last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* was an epitome of radical science, natural and theological, at the time of its appearance about twenty years ago. Now, the average cultivated mind of England has got up to it and beyond it. The new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is an epitome of the radical science, natural and theological, of the present time. In twenty years the average cultivated mind of England will be up to this. Prof. Smith's article on the Bible, now so heretical, will then be orthodox enough. Here in America,

it will not be very different. The New Criticism is bound to prevail, and not merely among an esoteric class, who will keep it to themselves. There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed. What is told in the ear will be proclaimed on the house-tops. Science is growing more diffusive every day. There is a telephone in every laboratory and every study communicating with the average life of men. A religion true to all the ignorant, false to all the educated, will be less possible in America than anywhere else. This is the dream of some, I know. But it is not going to come true. Education is too general; culture is too diffused. America is bound to follow England and the Continent in their rejection of "the whole anthropomorphic and miraculous religion of tradition." Here as there, this is to be voted unsound and untenable. A host of obscurantists may delay the inevitable day, but it will surely come. The supernatural Church, the supernatural Bible, the supernatural Christ and Christianity, have lost their hold already on the best intelligence of America as of Europe. Supernaturalism, in a little while, will be synonymous with ignorance. But ignorance, though still its name is legion, is a legion whose ranks are being decimated again and again. The school, the press, and even here and there the pulpit, are pouring into it the grape and canister which do not kill, but make alive with new intelligence.

The tide which is going out is the tide of traditional Christianity, and traditional Christianity means not only the five points of Calvinism, not

only total depravity and eternal hell, not only the vicarious atonement, not only miracles and prophecies, but the Bible as infallibly or specially inspired; Christ as a supernatural, preternatural, or non-natural being; God as a great non-natural man, about whom we can talk "as if he were a man on the next street," who plays fast and loose with his own laws, who can be wearied out with prayers, and who kills off one member after another of a man's family to make him "work for souls." Traditional Christianity means all this and more, and all of this is going out; nor do I know a sweeter music than "its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar." But Matthew Arnold thinks that more is going than all this, and while he is quite willing that all this should go—ay, speeds the parting guest with many a jeering phrase—he does not want any thing else to go with it. He wants supernatural Christianity to go, but not Christianity; supernatural religion, but not religion. And he sees signs, or thinks he does, that along with supernatural Christianity, Christianity is going; along with supernatural religion, all religion. Liberal opinion on the Continent, and especially among the Latin nations, on whom Protestantism did not lay hold, tends to treat traditional religion and Christianity as identical. Are they identical? Arnold declares that they are not. Christianity, he says, has natural truth for the mind and conscience of men, while the traditional supernatural religion has not natural truth, the only truth which can stand. It must be allowed that there is something almost comical in this

man's standing so stoutly for the natural truth of Christianity, when we consider what his Christianity is. Not only is it what the majority of Christian men would refuse to call Christianity, but it is what the majority of religious men would refuse to call religion. For it is Christianity without trinity or atonement, without prophecy or miracle, without a supernatural Bible, Church, or Christ; and it is religion without faith in any personal God or any personal immortality. And yet a religion without any of these things is to him something worth earnestly contending for, something which seems to him infinitely beautiful, something about which he can be very eloquent and very impressive. Some would call it "mere morality." But he insists that it is not. It is morality touched with emotion. It is righteousness. It is the belief that *righteousness tendeth unto life* and the practice of this belief. But why call this Christianity? Because he says it is the heart of either Testament. Because the Bible—Old Testament and New—is marvellously adapted to encourage this belief, and to inspire the practice of it. Because all the greatest figures of the Bible, and especially Jesus, stand pre-eminently for this belief in and this practice of righteousness. But for myself, I am obliged to doubt whether the Bible stands or can be made to stand in any such vital relations to the belief in and the practice of righteousness as Matthew Arnold thinks it must and can. If every body could see the Bible as he sees it, then indeed it might. For he has looked so steadily at the sun

of righteousness that shines in it that he cannot see any thing else. For others to see the Bible as he sees it, it would be necessary for them not only to read his books, but to drench themselves with them and soak themselves in them, through and through; to be entirely Matthew-Arnoldized. Now, in a few instances this may come to pass, but it will never very generally. No book is so much read as the Bible, and none is so little understood. Tender women read it for an hour at morn and night, and do not get one true idea out of it. They bring to it their preconceptions. They put them into it. They take them out again. For the majority of readers, the Bible is encrusted inches thick with preconceptions, through which they never penetrate to its own proper meanings. But could we see the Bible just as it is, it may be doubted whether it would be to us just what it is to Matthew Arnold. Granted that Righteousness is the great word of either Testament; it is not the only word. There is Piety as well as Morality in these writings of a thousand years. There is worship as well as righteousness. There is mountainous trust as well as mountainous duty. There is not only "a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness," but a Power not ourselves that makes for all the order and mystery and wonder of the outward universe. If, indeed, the sum-total of Christianity be what Mr. Arnold thinks, I do not see why we should stickle for the Christian name. The Church of England, he says, is a national society for the promotion of goodness, and the Bible is a book whose central

affirmation is that goodness is the one thing needful. There is reason here for declining to be *anti*-Christian certainly, but not for treating coldly those who do not choose to bear the Christian name, nor for insisting violently that we are Christians, if others say that we are not. And when we consider what our traditional Christianity is, what a muddle of bigotry and superstition and sentimentalism, I do not wonder at any man's feeling that it is impossible to extricate the Christian name from this entanglement. But because all this is not the Christianity of Jesus, because I am persuaded that our most radical Theism, Christian or Jewish, is nearer the religion of Jesus than all this, I have a sense of loyalty to him ; I do not like to leave him to the tender mercies of these people who are casting lots for his garments, and crowning him with thorns, and spitting in his face. There stood a man in front of Rubens' famous picture, *The Descent from the Cross*, so much absorbed in it that it was hard reality to him. "Come," said his friends, "let us be going." "Not till they get him down," said he. "Not till *we* get him down," say I, when friends invite me to refuse with them the Christian name. Not till these men who crucify him every day afresh with ignorant adulation, are proved to be no followers of one whose title to our reverence is that he stood for the simplicity of religion; for salvation by righteousness, and by that alone; for human helpfulness and trust in God. In the mean time, I hold a thousand times more dear those who, with Jesus, stand for these supreme

realities, by whom the Christian name has been discarded, than those who, proudly wearing it, and denying it to all who cannot talk their gibberish, fail to appreciate, in any least degree, the divine significance of that life which Jesus lived, that death to which the orthodoxy of Judea condemned him in its blind fatuity.

A more important question than whether the outgoing tide of the traditional religion will take along with it the Christian *name*, is the question whether the Christian *thing* is going to remain—the thing that Jesus stood for, the simplicity of religion, salvation by righteousness, and by this alone, trust in the Father, love for his children, each and all. Better a thousand times the thing without the name than the name without the thing. Once let the thing be duly recognized, and never fear but that the Bible will receive all honor for the paramount importance which it gives to it; but that the name of Jesus will be cherished as the name of one who was indeed a light shining in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

But does the ebb of the traditional religion foretell the flow of something better worth our reverence? Obedient to the attractive force of scientific truth, is the great sea of faith heaping itself up in deep and silent places, soon to fling itself amain upon the now denuding cliffs and beaches of the religious world? When the Son of Man cometh—the divine humanity forever generated by the Holy Spirit, that abides in every thing that is—when he comes, as he is al-

ways coming, will he find faith on the earth? O friends! believe it heartily. The outgoing of the old is the incoming of the new. A truce to all analogies. They are deceptive and misleading. Upon the spiritual plane, the ebb and flow of faith are not consecutive, but simultaneous. They strive with one another all along the sounding shore of time. The same force that is withdrawing the traditional religion is bringing in a religion of reason and imagination and the moral sentiment such as never yet, since time began, made glad the human heart. And not so surely was the dawn of Christianity foretold by men of earlier time as this has been by prophets of our day. "There will be a new church," says one of them, "founded on moral science; at first cold and naked—a babe in the manger again; the algebra and mathematics of ethical law; the church of men to come, without shawms, or psaltery, or sackbut; but it will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters; science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry. Was never stoicism so stern and exigent as this shall be." He might have added, Never Methodism half so glad. For it shall not be Stoicism. It shall not be more individual than social. It shall rejoice in the Lord. Not by minimizing its wants, but by maximizing its supplies, it shall attain to inward peace and joy. Want? It *shall* want, and shall have, all it can hold of beauty, truth, and good, knowing the good God grudges nothing to his children, so that they grudge each other nothing of their best.

But in this rising faith, what place will there be found for reverences corresponding in some way to the most precious of the past? Faith in Jesus: will the Son of Man, at his coming, find this upon the earth? He will not find faith in the fable of his supernatural birth and resurrection; faith in his deity or super-human character of any sort; faith in his blood as magical to quench the wrath of God. But he will find faith in his distinctive thought, which was, as I have said, the simplicity of religion. Because there is a growing faith apparent everywhere in this distinctive thought, there is a growing faith in him who taught it with so much "sweet reasonableness" by the lake-sides and on the hillsides of Judea, and amid the splendid fascinations of its holy city.

And as it is with the man Jesus, so is it with the Church. The humanity of the future will not find the same faith in it on the earth that the humanity of the past found, so often to its hurt and sorrow. The old faith is going away. It is going away, in spite of all appearances to the contrary; in spite of Papal infallibility at Rome; ritualism in England; the building of Methodist churches, one a day, here in America. But a new faith is just as surely coming in. It is not faith in the Church as a superhuman, supernatural element in human history, or as the authoritative guardian of human thought; the arbitrary keeper of men's consciences; a finality thrust in between the soul and God; a worker of charms, a sayer of incantations. But it is faith in the Church as a symbol, however imperfect, of perpetual needs and aspirations; faith that it can

and will ere long be open as the day to all new truth, the friend of all good causes; that it will yet be a common ground for men to gather on to somehow utter forth their joyful sense of infinite protection, of the eternal sacredness of truth and the perpetual need of mutual help and furtherance between man and man.'

As with the Church so with its sacred book: there is an incoming as well as an outgoing tide of faith. The faith that is going out is faith in the Bible as a charm, an amulet, a fetish. The faith that is coming in is faith in it as the natural helper of our sorrow and our joy. The faith that is going is faith that it is a supernatural, superhuman book. The rising is faith that it is intensely natural, intensely human. The going faith is faith that it is a literal transcript of the Divine Mind; the coming faith is faith that it is the unconscious record of the development of a great people's religious ideas, from the lowest fetishism and mythology up to the lofty spiritual monotheism of Jesus. I remember, as a boy, seeing at the Charlestown Navy Yard a great three-decker which had never been launched. There she had stood year after year, ingeniously propped up, and sheltered by an enormous building from the inclement weather, but suffering slow decay, and seemingly ashamed to perish in an alien element instead of battling with the ocean-storms and answering to their thunders with her own. And I have sometimes thought the Bible not unlike that great *Virginia*. A thousand artificial props sustain it, and over it the Church spreads her protecting roof to shield it from the elemental forces

of the human mind. But knock away the clogs and hindrances that keep it fixed in shameful isolation, and it will spurn these artificial props and feel the natural reverence of mankind sustaining it as in an ocean's large embrace. Fear not that any wave can do it violence, or any wind can blow it harm. Was never ship so safe in sheltered haven as this shall be upon the open sea of human thought and love. The new reverence for it will be as different as possible from the old, but it will be infinitely wiser and sweeter.

But Bible, Church, and Christ are not the ultimate realities. These are God and Man, and their relation here and now. Will the Son of Man when he cometh find faith in these upon the earth? Not faith in God as a non-natural man ; as one who rends the heavens and comes down as a miraculous interloper ; as one who can be badgered by men's supplications into attending to their business. This is the ebbing faith. The rising faith is faith in One who is forever immanent in matter and in man ; who is as near to our America as to Christ's Judea ; ay, who is "never so far off as even to be near" at all. Men talk of faith in miracle, and lament that it is dying out. But the expression is a contradictory proposition. Law is the word of the Eternal, and if he breaks his law he breaks his word. You would not say of any man : "I have faith that he will break his word." Why say it then of God? It is impossible for him to lie.

But how about the ebbing faith in man? There has been no faith in him in the past. The doctrines of original sin and total depravity have

been the formulæ of men's lack of faith in him. But these new theories of his descent, or ascent, from the most loathsome savagery, if not from ape-like ancestors—how do these comport with faith in him? Better, it seems to me, than the old-time theories of a golden age, an Eden and all that; a magnificent beginning, soon rushing down into the lowest misery and shame. The golden age had better be before us than behind. The Chinese do well to ennable the ancestry of a man who has distinguished himself. Man's earliest ancestry is ennobled by his present nobleness. There was something there in the beginning or there would not have been a Plato, a Shakspere, a Watt, a Fulton, a Morse, a Goodyear, a Channing, a Parker, anywhere along the line. But the rising faith in man is not so much conditioned by his original ancestry as by his present power and possibility. He stands to-day upon the top of his attainment. Though he was born in the valleys, to-day he stands upon the heights, and the prospect is the more delightful for the long and toilsome way that he has come. Many have gone back. Many have given out upon the way. But he, like Moses, stands upon the mount of vision.

Wind-swept and bare, the fields of air
Give the weaned eagles room for play;
On mightier wing his soul doth spring
To unseen summits far away.

Yes, there are other peaks so high above him that he cannot see them yet. What arts, what sciences, what polities, what poems and religions shall yet be the fruitage of his teeming heart and

brain ! The long way he has come is prophetic of the long way he has to go. "Only let me go on, go on," is still the song his eager heart is singing.

And with the new faith in man comes a new faith in immortality. How deep his roots go down into the past, how high his branches shoot into the future times ! Ah ! but the faith in personal, conscious immortality—is there any rising faith in this ? There is better even than this. There is faith steadily rising that there will be such immortality if it is best ; and that if there is not, it will be only because this is best. Secure of this, we can afford to wait for a solution which, at the longest, cannot be very long delayed, our hope sustained by every noble spirit that goes over to the silent majority, thinking of whom we cannot make them dead.

I grant that men are not so garrulous about the great Beyond as they have been in times not far remote. If any lack of faith is indicated thus, there is abundant compensation in the rising faith of men in the eternal Now. The dream of future happiness in ages past has been the child of present misery. When earth was literally hell, to dream of heaven overmuch was just as natural as for starving men to dream of dainty feasts, of tables groaning with the weight

Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ;
With jellies smoother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups tint with cinnamon.

Less and less, as the conditions of life become ameliorated here, do men take refuge in imaginations, wholly groundless, of a life beyond the grave.

The rising faith is faith in the abundant glory, beauty, wonder of the life which now is. Better believe in this while it is ours than overmuch in any life beyond. Were this life such a failure as the theologians have fancied it, I, for one, should hardly care to venture on another. But because this is so unspeakably divine, I have no fear for what may be beyond.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air ;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care..

But time would fail me if I should attempt to speak of all the elements that make up the rising faith. For I should have to speak of the new faith in matter, once and still so flouted and despised, now seen to be the haunt of mystery and the home of thought; of the new faith in human nature, in the full range of all its appetites and passions, as not only made, but also meant by the Eternal; in reason as the only basis of authority; in truth as always better than the fairest falsity; in character as the only name given under heaven by which we can be saved. Such are a few of the more salient aspects of the rising faith. Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that cometh: the Son of Man, the Humanity of the future which is to find this faith upon the earth, and hand it on, more beautiful and bright, to later generations. Let us go forth to meet it with hilarity and song—nay, rather with bowed heads, silent with awe, and wonder, and thanksgiving. Blessed are the eyes that see the things which we see, and the

ears that hear the things which we hear. For I say unto you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that we see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that we hear and have not heard them.

Here ends another year of our associated life as minister and people.* This rising faith which I have spoken of to-day has ever been my theme since we returned, amid the autumn splendors, to this place of thought and aspiration. And now we are going forth again upon our various quests. As you go, preach; not lengthy sermons like to this, but brief and pointed ones, now of unspoken behavior and anon of seasonable speech. Preach everywhere this rising faith which I have preached to you. Witness a good confession. Do not emasculate it, feigning that it is only a little different from the faith of the majority. For it is very different from theirs. Do not apologize for it. It needs no apologies. It is worthy of all praise, all honor, all assertion. What are we that, by so little merit of our own, we have been chosen to declare this message of the most high God unto his people? See that you *do* declare it without any vagueness or equivocation. And, through these days of absence from each other, let us gather up our strength to serve it with a larger mind, a stouter will, a holier consecration.

* This sermon was the last before the summer vacation.

FATE AND FREEDOM.

WE do well to celebrate the freedom of the individual, the power he has over his own life to mould and fashion it. Upon this head it has always seemed to me that life is wiser than philosophy ; that the assertion of the freedom of the will means something all-important ; that though every statement of the doctrine may be false, the statements all mean something infinitely truer than any statement of the doctrine of necessity, unless it be some very recent one. John Stuart Mill has a great name as a moral necessarian, but we have his word for it that the popular doctrine of the freedom of the will is infinitely truer than that doctrine of necessity which represents man as the creature of circumstances. Actions are necessary, but what is most concerned in making them so is the character of the individual. What he is determines what he will choose.

I have celebrated freedom a great many times, and never half so well as it deserves, but to-day I mean to celebrate fate or fortune, or whatever it is that gives to life its character of continual sur-

prise, which is the incalculable factor in all our plannings and doings, which gives to its beloved while they sleep. I should hate to be a puppet, or think my fellow-creatures puppets; but I should hate still worse to feel that I had the management of my life entirely in my own hands; that there was not at every point divine coöperation; that my little task and care were not taken up by a Supreme Intelligence and fitted in with his immutable designs. And more than to feel that all men are puppets I should hate to feel that all of them together have the world at large, society and civilization, in their safe-keeping; that some common reason, soul, intelligence, does not conspire with them, or, if need be, against them all, to further their development and bring in the heavenly kingdom upon earth. But what I like best to feel, and what I can not help feeling, is that all our freedom rests upon a ground of fate; that there are limits everywhere; that the true freedom only comes with the intelligence that perceives these limits, and the courage that accepts them. For, once accepted, they are feet and wings, and give to us the freedom of all cities, and through the highest altitudes a right of way.

"I said, I will water my garden-bed, and lo! my brook became a river, and my river a sea."* It is not easy to divine exactly what sort of a device in hydraulics the man was thinking of who used this metaphor, but the metaphor will answer to convey the intimation that many things turn out quite different from our anticipations, and that the beginnings of many mighty and far-reach-

* Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 31.

ing things are very trivial. This or that detail of business or of love may have prospered very much as we designed; but, looking at our lives in a large way, is not the impression almost invariable, that a great deal has been done for us, and we have done a very little for ourselves; that, whatever the result, it is not anything that was foreseen or pre-arranged? It is none of our doings, or but very little, that we are married to this wife, or to that business or profession, or that we are working in this, that, or the other place. How slight the seeming accidents by which these things have been determined for us! I am sure that no good times have ever served me such a good turn as the hard times of 1857, but for which I might have been shaping soles in quite another fashion to this day, and been no worse a man, but infinitely less happy in my work. To spend something for schooling seemed better economy than working for nothing and finding my own thread. How many of us owe the most important changes and most fortunate conditions of our lives to the most petty and apparently untoward circumstances! Is man the architect of his own fortunes? I doubt it very much. He is the builder of them, not the architect. He makes not the design, nor sees it from the start. It is revealed to him little by little—a day's work at a time. We sail the seas of life under sealed orders, nor know from the beginning at what ports we are to touch, what enemies we are to engage, what freights we are to carry. “The individual,” says Emerson, “is always mistaken. He designed

many things and drew in some persons as coadjutors, quarrelled with some or all, blundered much, and something is done; all are a little advanced, but the individual is always mistaken. The results of life are uncalculated and incalculable. The years teach much which the days never know." Amen to that, answers the experience of almost every man who is not a hopeless egotist.

It is the first step which costs, we say; but if we said "which counts," the saying would be truer. For the first step is apt to be a short and feeble and unconscious one. In Victor Hugo's "*Les Misérables*," because a certain woman happened to be sitting down instead of standing up, when another person first saw her, the whole after-life of this person was of a different shape and meaning. Many a man and woman might, if they would, confess what direction has been given to their lives by some bit of dress or color, or chance attitude, or tone of voice. There are no such matchmakers as the mountains, for all they look so dignified; no such go-betweens as the cliffs and beaches. "When one thinks of country houses and country lanes," says Thackeray, "it is a wonder that any body remains unmarried." With our business and our culture it is much the same as with our affections. It is not merely that the great merchants and manufacturers little imagine at the beginning what is coming of their tiny enterprise, though these also furnish illustrations of the tendency. Goodyear knew that he was dealing with an elastic substance, but little

dreamed what uses it would stretch to cover. As little could Fulton foresee the ocean steamer, or Watt and Stephenson the net-work of railroads that reticulates the civilized world, or Franklin the electric telegraph that puts a girdle round the earth in less than forty minutes. But with un-heard-of men there is the same inability to know from the beginning what is coming on beyond. With thought it is not otherwise. We read a book, and it is like embarking on a vessel : we will go as far as that goes, and then return, we think, or tarry there a while. But we never return. We are put on board some other friendly vessel, and some other still, and so go sailing round the world. Or very likely our first vessel goes to wreck, and we are taken off upon some foreign deck, where all at first are strangers, and we think them enemies, but find them out ere long to be the best of friends,—the men, the thoughts, the creed, the life which we have always missed, but what we missed not knowing.

As feeble, as unconscious, as these personal beginnings are the beginnings of all great civic and social enterprises, the foundings of cities and of states. A fort upon the Tiber, a fishing village on the Thames, become respectively Rome and London. The Pilgrim fathers seek a refuge from intolerance, and what comes of it is the Declaration of Independence and its centennial celebration. Columbus, seeking a new route to the Indies, stumbles upon a continent,

Midmost the beating of the steely sea.

Peter the Hermit stirs up a crusade to rescue

the holy sepulchre from the grasp of the Mohammedans, and lo ! his brook becomes a river, and his river a sea. The holy sepulchre was not rescued, but the crusades went thundering on century after century, and what came of them was the death of mediævalism, the renaissance of art and literature, Greece rising from the dead with the New Testament in her hand, the end of feudalism, the growth of nationality—in short, modern Europe. For an infallible church voicing itself through popes and councils, Luther would have an infallible Bible interpreted by private judgment, and what comes of it is a multiplicity of sects ; is the conviction that the Bible is not infallible ; is anti-supernaturalism in the pulpit and the pews. Wesley would fain infuse a little earnestness into the stagnant mass of the established faith of England. But he would create no schism ; God forbid ! And what came of it was Methodism in England and America. And back of all this, Jesus of Nazareth would fain teach his fellow-countrymen that being subject to hatred and impurity was infinitely worse than being subject to the power of Rome. With that he would not meddle. And what came of it was the subjection of the Roman Empire to the Christian religion in about three centuries. No ; Mr. Emerson was guilty of no serious exaggeration when he said, “ The individual is always mistaken.”

If, from the beginnings of great civic and religious movements we turn to the beginnings of civilization, of its arts and sciences and social polities, we shall find men still watering their garden-beds

unconscious that the brook will grow into a river, and the river grow into a sea. No vision of St. Peter's or the Parthenon came to the first rude architect; no vision of the organ to the first man who blew upon a reed and heard a sound that made him blow again; no vision of ceramic splendors to the first man who moulded clay into a useful vessel; no vision of Axminster looms to the first man who scattered rushes on a floor or made the first rude web; no vision of Faraday and Morse to the first man who, happening to rub a piece of amber, discovered an electric property; no vision of Herschel and Lockyer to the first watchers of the stars, nor of Linnæus to the first observers of the flowers, nor of Darwin and Haeckel to the first rude anthropologist. So much the more glory for the rude beginners! It they could have seen the river and the sea, it would be less a wonder that they watered their garden-beds so faithfully—if they could have known what would have come of it all. But that, not knowing, they were so earnest and patient, this is their glory; and not to win a like would be our everlasting shame.

I celebrate that fate, or fortune, or necessity, in whose hands we are as clay in the hands of the potter; which uses us for purposes of which we have no thought; which will not answer our weak prayers but will give us better things than we can ask for or even think; which from so many weak and rude beginnings deduces so many vast and beautiful conclusions. I celebrate that stream of tendency which sweeps along our plans and

purposes upon its bosom; that over-soul, that under-soul, that *natura naturans* of which the schoolmen talked, that supreme intelligence, the Holy Spirit, lodged in each atom and event.

Not as we hoped, but what are we?
Above our broken dreams and plans,
God lays with wiser hand than man's
The corner-stones of liberty.

Ay, and the corner-stone of every art and science, of every private undertaking, of every civic, social, or religious enterprise since time began.

But in all this, mind you, there is no chance, no accident; nothing happens; every thing is linked and orderly. The secret of it, for one thing, is the common-sense of the community and of mankind, "not the sense that is common, but the sense that is in common." The individual is always mistaken, because he never makes sufficient allowance for the fact that he is not alone, and that his personal desire is not the only force by which he is compelled. The direction of his talent, of his genius, of his activity, is the resultant of a thousand and ten thousand balancing and counteracting shocks of influence. Our brook becomes a river, and our river a sea, not so much by any process of self-enlargement as by the increment of tributary streams. The systems of thought which are vital, which become the common atmosphere men breathe, are never, it would seem, the outcome of any individual genius. "The only intellectual scheme that history respects is that which grows by its own slow, irresistible process from the contributions of the mil-

lions of honest, intelligent, thinking men who do each his best to shape his own thought to the demand of his own time." The same is true of all great practical affairs. Not Paul, nor even Jesus, may decide the form which Christianity shall take, but their thoughts must enter into combination with the thoughts of Greek philosophers and Roman jurists, and even with the superstitious hopes and fears of millions of believers. The result may be ideally inferior to the original conception of the founder, but it will be practically superior, seeing that systems of religion do their work less in virtue of their ideal perfection than in virtue of their average fitness to their times and places. So Protestantism may not be what Luther or Calvin proposes. Innumerable other minds and wills must enter into combination with theirs, and the resultant will be something very different, but something vastly better than they planned. For the common-sense of the community is always wiser than the common-sense, or even the uncommon-sense, of individuals. God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. So Methodism will not be what Wesley intended, while Quakerism will die a lingering death because more anxious to be faithful to the letter than to the spirit of George Fox. So America will not be so much what Washington and Hamilton would have her, as something she must be in virtue of the character and tendency of the great body of her people.

So, then, that which we call fate or fortune, and which brings to pass for individuals and states something quite different from the original inten-

tion, is, for one thing, the common-sense of the community, the sense which is in common, the universal reason of humanity. For another thing, it is, the law of vital correlation. The phrase is lofty, but the law is simple enough. It is, that every change which takes place in any part of any animal or social organism necessitates a series of changes in related parts of the same organism. It is the old story of the new sofa which compelled new furniture throughout, and then new carpets and new paper-hangings, and so on, till the whole house had been remodelled. For a scientific illustration, take the natural selection of the strong-jawed lions, sure, in the struggle for existence, to be selected from the weak ones to perpetuate the race. But heavier jaws demand stronger muscles to move them, and larger bones of the skull into which the jaws fit, and with this general increase of the size of the head there must be larger vertebræ to support it, and larger cervical muscles to move it. These changes will demand yet others in the chest and lungs, and these in the stomach and intestines, and these in the entire nervous system of the animal, and in its temperament and modes of life. So the selection of heavier jaws ends in the complete metamorphosis of the lion's build and nature. Now this process of vital correlation is a process that is always going on in individuals and states. It is the fate which overmasters individuals and brings to pass something quite different from that which they intend. It accounts for the surprise which almost always lies in wait for thinkers and reformers.

The American patriots of 1774 abominate the thought of independence; as late as January, 1776, curse Thomas Paine for advocating such a step. Catch the men of the Long Parliament in 1640 disloyal to their king, much more beheading him. But thanks to the law of correlation—that every change initiates a series of changes in related parts—no faded rose ever dropped from its stem more naturally than the king's head from his shoulders in due time. Your intellectual freedom, men told the Unitarians of 1820, will not stop with questioning whether this or the other doctrine is Biblical. It will question the authority of the Bible. It will search all things, even the deep things of God. The Unitarians did not believe it, but long since the prophecy was fulfilled. And this same law of correlation is the fate that varies so much from the original design our individual schemes of work and love. It is a child's finger on a button, but that button, step by step, connects with reservoirs of hoarded energy, and sets that energy in motion, and the gates of hell can not prevail against it. So everywhere in the community there is a hoarded energy of thought and love and work panting for liberation, and only waiting for the appropriate touch to consummate its end.

Ah, but the appropriate touch! How know where and when to give it? how find the button that is in league with battery and dynamite? I think it is wherever there is any honest work that can be done, any good thought that can be entertained, or any pure affection. For the common-sense of the world, in so far as it is sense and

not mere foolishness or craze, is made up of the interacting and reacting thought of earnest men and women. True to your own light, doing your best as time and circumstance allow, it shall be better for you and for all concerned than if you were either a passive clod or active power of evil. For let it never be forgotten that fate, so far as it is social, is not independent of persons, but is made up of persons. What we are called upon to be is factors in this social fate, and to see to it, so far as we are concerned, that it is a fate for good and not for evil. There is no waste of power. We may not do what we attempt, but the attempt will prosper us by its reactionary force, and will not fail of doing something for the general emancipation of humanity. Alas, for him by whom the perception of these fatal elements in life is apprehended as a furlough from the host, or a discharge from service, or who shirks the fight because the order of battle has not been confided to him by the commander-in-chief, or because, amid the smoke, he can not see how things are getting on.

If hopes are cheats, fears may be liars ;
It may be in yon smoke concealed.
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, *but for you*, possess the field.

So, then, no man can count himself out. No man can take a furlough or apply for a discharge. Talk not of submission to the inevitable. You, too, are inevitable. The inevitable to which alone we should submit is the sum total of all the forces that environ us, plus our own energy of furtherance and resistance. Plenty of heroic races and

heroic men have believed themselves fated; ay, but fated to do great things. The whole secret of Mohammedan fatalism is in that little story about Omar and the Prophet, Omar saying, "I will loose my camel and commit him to God;" the prophet answering, "Nay, but tie thy camel and commit him to God." The rule for fate is much the same as that which has been given for prayer. "Pray as if God did every thing; work as if God did nothing." One may believe that fate is every thing only on condition that he regards himself as fated to pursue all truth, and to fulfil all righteousness.

If fate were the obverse of the coinage whose reverse is chance, then we might well refuse it currency. But its reverse is law—and it is by perceiving this to be so,—by perceiving and accepting the omnipresence of law, that we are reconciled forever to our limitations. We see that they are wings to our intelligence and feet to our designs. We see that without them life would be frantic and chaotic; and with this perception we go over to their side. "He who sees through the design presides over it, and must will that which must be." "In short" as Wordsworth verses it, "the prison unto which we doom ourselves no prison is," and as Sir Richard Lovelace sings:

If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty.

But because there is fate let there be also charity. It is not as if we could do just what we would and be just what we would. The good that we would

we do not, and the evil that we would not that we do. For we have a law in our members warring against the law of our minds and bringing us into captivity to the law that is in our members. You who were well-born,—that is to say, born of a healthy parentage, honest and wise, and have not a drop of lazy blood in your whole body,—be not too hard upon less fortunate folk, ill-born, with sluggish brains, and blood which is the very juice of idleness. Yes, if there is fate let there be also charity. And, once more, let there be modesty. Why should you be so proud, dear girl, because you are so beautiful, or you, young man, because you have a ready wit? Neither the handsome face nor ready wit was of your making. I think we take far too much credit to ourselves for all our graces, virtues, and superiorities. “Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy great name.”

And yet, again, because there is fate let us, if possible, be fated by those things and persons that shall compel us in the way that we would go—the way revealed to us in our best hours.

We may not kindle when we will
The fire that in the heart abides ;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery the soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight-willed,
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

There is fate, but there is also choice of fate. The fate is from without and from within. That from within, the fate of organization, is not to any great degree elective. Our wishes were not consulted when we were born, nor ere we were encased in

our present bodies were we permitted, as in Plato's dialogue, to choose from many one to serve us through our earthly pilgrimage. If we had been, how differently many of us would have chosen! though some, of course, are more than satisfied,—can not conceive of any change that would not be for the worse. And all of us know *other* persons who impress us in this way, but, somehow, they are never those who so impress themselves. We can not choose our bodies or our brains, but we can choose to make the best of what we have, or something less. We know the dissipations and excesses and neglects that dull our intellectual part, that make us irritable, and cruel, and unjust. Obedience to the laws of physical life, which, because we are units, are equally the laws of intellectual and moral life, is organization in the making. And within certain limits we can choose obedience to these laws.

Our friends and our companions have the quality of fate in them, and, within certain limits, we have the choice of these. If they are pure and noble, they become a law unto our life. If they put their trust in us, we dare not disappoint them. If they expect great things of us, though we should die for it, we will fulfil for them their hearts' desire. But woe is unto us if for our friends and our companions we choose such as will flatter us, such as will be content with what we are, and interfere to save us from the pricks of our consciences. Such are a fate for evil, not for good. Let us not choose such for our friends, and from their unmerited approbation let us be ever ready

to appeal to the condemning voice in our own breast.

Speaking of friends we speak implicitly of books. But they demand a sentence of explicit reverence and love. And here the choice is easier than among living persons, who, being active, come to us, while the books, being passive, wait for us to come to them, and never force themselves on our acquaintance. But what friends there are among them, what counsellors! How compelling is the force of the ideals which they present to us, of the laws which they illustrate and enforce, of the characters which they reveal to us! There are books which we can never read without giving bonds of secret tears to put away our grossness and unworthiness. Such let us seek, and throned them on the seat of judgment, and hale before their bar our meannesses and our frivolities, our ambitions and our crimes—"our virtues, too, those lesser crimes, half-converts to the right."

But let us not dwell so much upon the fate by which we are compelled as to forget the fate we are, and which compels in turn. O, that it were possible for us to live so grandly and purely that we should shame all low behavior in our friends and our acquaintances, and that, at the same time, we might maintain towards them an attitude of such generous expectation that they would rather die than fail to justify it to the full!

I said I will water my garden-bed, and lo! my brook became a river, and the river a sea. Thanks for the beautiful fatality which from our small beginnings little by little brings to pass such large and

manifold results. Thanks for the common-sense, the universal reason, that conspires with our endeavors, or against them, to advance us in the ways of truth and righteousness, and to increase the sum of universal benefit. Thanks for the adamantine limitations that shut us in on every side but one, and that the side which opens into boundless rectitude, into all the splendors of integrity, the infinite paths of tenderness, and helpfulness, and self-surrendering love.

“Why is light given to a man to whom the way is hid?” asks the much-suffering Job, and Oliver Cromwell answers him across the centuries, “A man never rises so high as when he knows not whither he is going.” To walk by the light given, although the way be hid, to water the garden-bed not knowing even whether we shall pluck or see a single flower, but only knowing that to do this thing is our appointed task, and yet to trust that not in vain shall be the smallest atom of our faithfulness—this is the hardest and the holiest thing a mortal man can do. But who of us, if any such there be, that have been utterly faithful to our most exigent ideals, have not in our own hearts the witness that, whatever we have missed, we have attained to better satisfactions than our hearts were equal to desire? Nor can I doubt that for the world at large our present toil is no mere ending of some beginning infinitely remote, but itself also a beginning of arts and sciences and polities and worships that shall as far outrun all present arts and sciences and polities and worships as these outrun the earliest recorded, or

that can be imagined. Thank God that we are marshalled upon such a plain, that we are fighting such a battle, although we can not see how it is going and have not been entrusted with the plan of the campaign! *The orders for the day we know.* These let us obey, be they to march and fight, or stand and wait; nor fail to share our scanty water with our fellow-soldiers, standing or marching or fighting beside us in the burning heat and glare.

Stainless soldier on the walls
Knowing this—and knows no more,
Whoever fights, whoever falls,
 Justice conquers evermore.
And he who battles on her side,
 God, though he were ten times slain,
Crowns him victor glorified—
 Victor over death and pain
 Forever.

THE CHILD JESUS.

THE birth of any child into this world of ours is a significant event, though it may not appear so, even to those who are most intimately concerned. It is a wonder in itself, this little life, shrouded so long in densest mystery, putting in an appearance and lifting up its voice in frequent lamentations. It is a wonder in its possibilities of joy and sorrow, good and evil. I seldom, almost never, see a man or woman of our perishing and dangerous classes without some reversion of my thoughts to times when they were little, very little children, and made glad their mothers' hearts with their vague sputterings and indeterminate aspirations. A few days ago I saw the most hardened, wretched-looking man I ever saw, and, wreck that he was, imagined I could see a baby in his face of marvellous beauty, and wondered much whose fault it was, if any body's, that all that seeming promise had been so miserably belied. The birthday of any truly great man we do well to mark with honorable and festive rites. There may be crises in his life compared with which his birth seems but a trivial event. Somebody says that being married is much more portentous than being born. But marriage presupposes birth, which contains

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not only this great possibility but every other. And the greatest birthday in all history was that of which our Christmas is fictitiously agreed to be the anniversary. It matters very little that the exact day and year are quite unknown to us ; that the year from which we reckon our chronology was not agreed upon till the sixth century, and then upon wholly insufficient data ; that the true date was some years earlier—all of this matters very little. It was a piece of great good fortune that a definite day and year were fixed upon, especially a day on which men have been able to concentrate their regards of reverence and tenderness. Romanists, Protestants, and Rationalists, we are all agreed that, whenever it happened, the birth of Jesus was, of all events in the whole course of human history, the most important, fraught with the most stupendous intellectual and moral and political and social and religious consequences. In all the world that day there were probably not two more unimportant persons, to all outward seeming, than Joseph and Mary, the parents of the new-born child. Little could any one have dreamed that he was to discharge an office and to win a fame in comparison with which the office and the fame of Augustus, the ruling Cæsar, are as a farthing-candle to the sun. Only to Joseph and Mary and the other children, some of whom perhaps were born already, did it seem that something wonderful had happened, and these were infinitely wiser than the world beyond the door of their poor house.

How pleasant it would be if we could penetrate

the darkness in which lie concealed the infancy, the childhood, and the youth of Jesus, up to the time when he began his public ministry ! How we should like to know what manner of boy he was ; his build, his face ; whether he had the hair of reddish gold and the great luminous eyes which Holman Hunt has given to him in his famous picture ; what were his sports, and who were his companions, and how they regarded him ; whether he had any proper boyhood or was overshadowed from the first by vague anticipations of his future destiny ; what manner of people Joseph and Mary were, and whether they ' knew the gift of God, and who it was that spoke to them ' in their own child ; and if the other children loved him better or not quite so well for being different from them, a little moody and abstracted sometimes, when they wanted his advice about the synagogues or temples they were building with their father's chips ; just what instruction he received, and by what processes he came to look upon himself as chosen for the responsibilities and joys and sorrows of the great work he finally assumed. But of all this nothing is vouchsafed to us in the New Testament, which is our only source of information. His infancy is enveloped in a beautiful mythology, where the foot nowhere finds firm soil to tread upon ; and from his infancy till he is thirty years of age, he only once emerges from an obscurity otherwise impenetrable : this on the occasion of his first visit to Jerusalem, when he was twelve years old, when his father and mother sought him, sorrowing, and found him talking with the doctors

in the Temple. The genius of Holman Hunt,—a genius for patience,—putting years of antiquarian and local study into the making of a single picture, has enabled us to conceive of that scene with an exactness seldom attainable in our pictorial conceptions of the past. But with this exception, we get no direct glimpse into the childhood or the youth of Jesus; beyond this all is inferential. Even that this is a direct glimpse we can never feel quite sure; but it has no intrinsic improbability, as have the beautiful stories of his birth and infancy.

Are we then left entirely in the dark in regard to the child Jesus and those things which contributed to his early education? No, we are not; and for two reasons. First, in the accounts of his active ministry there are certain things implied about his childhood and his youth. Nor must it be forgotten that in such writings as the gospels, what is implied is of more value than what is directly stated; what we read between the lines is of more value than what we read in them. What is thus implied in the accounts of Jesus' later life is, however, of very limited amount. It is, broadly stated, that he was born in Nazareth (there not being a single allusion to the Bethlehemite nativity, beyond its mention in the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke, but plentiful allusions of a contrary import)—that he was one of a considerable family of children, mainly, if not all, younger than himself—a pleasant fact, to which Roman Catholic and even Protestant piety has been rather wilfully and very pruriently blind;

that the father was, in some sort, a carpenter, and that the boy, as was the custom, followed the father's trade; that Mary, apparently a woman of Cana, goes back there upon Joseph's death, which happens some time in advance of his son's arrival at distinct self-consciousness; that Jesus finds a plentiful lack of sympathy among his brothers and sisters, who are possibly related to him only on his mother's side.* This is about all we can infer, and this is very little. There is an apocryphal gospel called "The Gospel of the Infancy," which is much more explicit, but it contains nothing which need detain us long. It represents the little Jesus as a little god, and sometimes, if I may say so, as a little devil; as making sparrows and asses and oxen out of clay with his companions, and putting a stop to their boasting by making his figures fly and walk and eat; as cursing a little Sabbatarian who breaks down his fish-pools, which he has made upon the Sabbath, so that the little fellow dies; as cursing his school-master, who is about to punish him for not saying his letters, so that his hand is withered and he dies. The only kernel in these husks is the hint of mud-sparrows and fish-pools, and the antiquity of Dr. Birch; but as much as this we could have evolved from our general knowledge of human nature and boy's nature, which were much the same two thousand years ago as they are now.

Our second source of information, and it is

* On the supposition (Renan's) that she married again after the death of Joseph.

much more important than the first, is our general knowledge of the physical and social and religious environment of Jesus, during his childhood and his youth. Do you say that this was not peculiar to Jesus, but was common to him with thousands of other children in Galilee, hundreds in Nazareth? I grant it you, and yet without this environment Jesus never could have been the man he was. The man's work is the spark struck out between subject and object; in the case of Jesus, falling upon garnered heaps of old formalities and superstitions, and setting them ablaze, to clear the ground for new and better growths. The most brilliant of our modern critics, Hyppolite Taine, imagines that the total secret of a man's work is contained in his environment of time and race. The man is nothing save as an expression of the race and time. He makes no allowance, certainly no sufficient allowance, for the fact of individuality—of the difference in the talents, five and two and one and twenty-five and fifty and five hundred. But, if he were right, the men of Shakspere's time and race would have been all Shaksperes; the men of Raphael's time and race, all Raphaels; the men of Jesus' time and race, all Jesuses. But the fact is, there was only one Shakspere, only one Raphael, only one Jesus. The factors of environment, the time and race, were the same in hundreds and thousands of cases. But there remains to reckon with the individuality, never miraculous, but always obscure; never causeless, but caused by forces often too remote and hidden for us to discover them, even when we know the generation

of a man for centuries. A man's immediate parentage is the smallest part of them. The father of Shakspere is an alderman who cannot write his name. The fact of atavism, or reversion, as the physiologists call it, comes in to disturb all our calculations. That spark of genius in your child may have come from his ninety-ninth grandmother. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us;" the excellency and the defect also, that it may not be chargeable on this or that particular ancestor, but distributed all the way along the countless generations. "All this is known to Him alone who seeth in secret; though even here, if we seek his ways long and humbly enough in that newly revealed closet where young-eyed Science worships, he may reward us openly. Certainly when the revelation comes, those hidden processes will be found [more] truly sacred [than] Mary's conception through the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. A thousand scattered emanations of the Eternal Spirit, in the yearnings, prayers, righteousness, and heroism of the humblest of his progenitors, will be seen to have been stored up against this supreme fruition by Him without whom no sparrow falleth to the ground."* But we can trace or credit none of this. All we can do is simply recognize that then and there was a sublime religious soul, impressional, magnetic, "a grand soul to see and to respond. But to respond to what? Deep calleth unto deep. No Newton apart from the sublime order of the solar system;

* Rev. Francis Tiffany.

no Phidias apart from the glories of Elian and Olympian games; no Dante out of the shadow of the lurid gloom of the mediæval theology; no Milton sequestered from the political and religious throes of England."* And no Jesus any more, however naturally dowered,—no Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, the founder of a new religion, the unifying force of eighteen Christian centuries;—no such Jesus as this without Galilee or without Judea. Especially without Galilee. "The child is father of the man;" and it was in Galilee that Jesus spent his childhood. Let us endeavor to discover what his environment was; what aspects of nature kindled his sensibility; what village sights and sounds expanded or contracted his imagination; what sort of home assisted his development, directly or by antagonistic influences; what were his first impressions of the world, beyond the circle of his native hills, and what the nature of his early education. There is nothing wild or fanciful in such a quest as this. The simplicity and uniformity, together with the stability of eastern life, make it comparatively sure that we may venture on it without much disappointment or delusion.

Let us then in imagination transport ourselves to Galilee and back in time about eighteen hundred and eighty years. It is a beautiful country, as unlike Judea as possible, so much more green and fertile; not unlike our own Berkshire hills, but with a more luxurious verdure in the valleys, and a more wild and bar-

* Rev. Francis Tiffany.

ren look about the tops of the great hills and mountains. Situated several degrees south of our own latitude, it is a very bright and sunny land, where the sun strikes the limestone cliffs so bright that we can hardly look upon the landscape. Journeying along, every little while we come to a small town or village, made up of a few stone houses, low and flat; and there are little gardens near them, and fields in which are growing olive and fig trees, and the pomegranate and cypresses and vines, with here and there a terebinth with spreading branches, and, where there are streams or springs of water, the graceful palms that reach high up and wave their feathery plumes over the tops of all the other trees. There are more evergreens than hereabouts, the whole of Palestine lying in what is called "the evergreen belt," but the general appearance of the foliage is not unlike our own. Let us enter one of the least famous of these little towns. Nothing of note has ever happened here. There is not a single mention of it in the Old Testament; its fame is yet to make. Mohammedans and Eastern Jews will one day call the religionists whose Founder is yet unborn the Nazarenes, and not without due warrant. This little town stretches along and up a hill-side at the end of an upland valley. It is a thousand feet and more above the level of the sea, and the mountain to whose side it clings stretches still higher up behind it. There are hills all about it, fifteen of them, seeming to guard the town, says an old writer, as the rose's heart is guarded by its petals. But just a little upwards, back of the

town, the horizon is much extended. "To the west are unfolded the beautiful lines of Carmel, terminating in an abrupt point which seems to plunge into the sea."* Southward between Solam and the finely-rounded form of Tabor are seen the valley of the Jordan and the high plains of the Peræa. To the north appear still other mountains and glimpses of the distant sea. Renan has said that no place in the world is "better adapted to dreams of absolute happiness." Let a young soul of marvellous sensibility be born into the midst of this smiling and beautiful environment, and it will be very natural and easy for him to dream a dream of Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood and the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

Consider the appearance of the people who are surrounded by this smiling landscape, and who tend these fields and vines and live in these little cubic houses. Holman Hunt's picture will give you the most perfect idea that you can any way get of the dress of the men, women, and children. The men wear long, loose gowns, with a sash or belt about the waist. The children much the same. The women looser, and more flowing robes, with a shawl or kerchief about their heads, arranged so as to cover the lower part of the face, not the best part, nor the most dangerous, which is their great dark eyes, soft as a doe's, with their long lashes often making an unconscious trap wherein Gentiles find themselves enmeshed. They

* Renan.

are wonderfully beautiful women, and will remain so for two thousand years, and by and by their beauty will be regarded as the gift of the Virgin Mary, an unheard-of person at the time of our imaginary visit. They have rich olive complexions, and the men have even richer, from more constant exposure to the sun, and they are very picturesque, with their long beards and their big turbans. As we enter Nazareth, at the foot of the hill up which climbs the narrow village street, there is an open place and a spring which, in the actual, as in my imaginary present, quenches the village thirst. And hither come the women of the village with their urns, but do not hurry back. This is their "kettle-drum," their "meeting of the Dorcas," their women's club, where, setting down their urns and unkerchiefing their mouths, they talk of things quite as significant to them as the latest style of hat, or the great Vanderbilt wedding, or Daniel Deronda will be in nineteenth century America. Indeed, it may be on this very morning of our visit, they are talking about a real Daniel Deronda, a real would-be liberator of his people and organizer of their independent nationality, Judas the Gaulonite, who has just stirred up an insurrection over across Tiberias, only a few miles away, on the ground that it is not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, and he, with all his followers, has been cut in pieces by the Roman soldiery. There is always plenty of matter of this sort to talk about in the time we are imagining, Galilee is in such a ferment of political uneasiness and Messianic expec-

tation. This Nazareth is a town of three or four thousand inhabitants ; but so stable in its population that every body knows every body else and his affairs, even the most private, and perhaps upon this morning of our visit some nearer-home event has quite eclipsed the affair of Judas the Gaulonite. Up the high street, in one of the low houses, lives Joseph the carpenter and Mary his wife, and to-day a little child is born under their roof. This is the event of the day, a very common one in Nazareth, where children multiply, but never without interest, because children are regarded as "a blessing from the Lord," and almost every woman cherishes a secret hope that her boy-baby will be the Messiah. Perhaps the women talk of that this morning. Perhaps they wonder what possessed Mary to marry a man old enough to be her father. Perhaps they wonder why the new-comer is named Jesus. The name is so common (another form of Joshua) that you can hardly tell one boy from another, and the girls are almost as generally Marys as by and by they will be in Spain, where every girl-child will have a Mary somewhere among her many names, in honor of the happy woman with her baby on her arm up on the hill-side yonder. Listen to the talk of these women. It is not the Hebrew of the Old Testament, but a corruption of this, called Aramaic or Syriac, more different from the Old Testament Hebrew than Tennyson's English from Chaucer's. It has Greek and Roman words mixed up with it ; for these Galileans have many Greeks and Romans living among them and intermarry-

ing with them. The Jerusalem and other southern Jews make much of this. They talk of "Galilee of the Gentiles," and consider the Galileans an impure race, and their language rough and provincial, just what the Lancashire and Yorkshire dialects are to a Londoner.

Merging our identity in that of some one of these women, let us go up the straggling village-street and enter the little house which boasts a newborn child, a possible Messiah. It is a house of only one room, one room which serves for kitchen, living-room, and sleeping-room, and, when Joseph cannot work out of doors, for work-shop also. And the furniture of the house is as simple as its construction. It consists of a piece of matting, and a few pillows or cushions on the *ground* floor (not in our modern sense, but literally), two or three vessels of clay, and a painted chest which is at once wardrobe and chiffonier and safe and table. Be not in haste to waste your pity on the occupants of these narrow quarters. They are not confined to them so closely as we are to ours. They live much out of doors. The house-top is their sitting-room, and in warm weather their sleeping-chamber is all out of doors, the "brave o'erhanging firmament" their gorgeous canopy.

What sports and pleasures, what tasks and studies will fill up the days of the child Jesus, born in this one-roomed house, in this high mountain village, in the midst of this verdurous and smiling natural environment? As every other child has done from the beginning, he will do in play, this, that, or the other thing, which his eld-

ers do in earnest. Because he is a child, he will be happy. He will be carpenter and potter and vintner, and as imaginary village rabbi will instruct imaginary pupils. He will extemporize the best of toys, make boats and houses and little synagogues and temples out of his father's chips. For story-books and his first schooling he will have "that best Academe, a mother's knee." The memory of every Jewish mother is a repertory of wonderful stories which it is her duty and delight to impress upon the memory and imagination of her child. "Paradise is at the feet of mothers," says the Talmud, and there are abundant signs that the mothers of Palestine appreciated and accepted their high office. So the growing boy, big-eyed with wonder, will hear of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of Moses and Joshua, of Joseph and Samuel and David, of Solomon and Josiah and the prophets, of the heroic Maccabees and John Hyrcanus. He will be taught not only the history and the legends, but also the law of his race. He will not make fish-pools on the Sabbath, as he is represented doing in the Gospel of the Infancy. He will be taught to fast and to avoid touching various things regarded as impure; not to eat swine's flesh, and to dread a dead caterpillar more than a live one. But his parents will not be his only teachers. We of to-day do not believe in schools and education more than did the contemporaries of Jesus. "The world is only saved by the breath of the school-children," says one of their proverbs; and another, "Not even for the rebuilding of the temple should the education of

the children be neglected." The village schoolmaster is the *hazzan* or reader of the synagogue. His teaching is little more than deaconing out parts of the Old Testament for the children to memorize. Jesus will go to him and sit cross-legged on the floor, and recite texts in concert with his olive-cheeked companions. Nazareth is too mean a place to support a school of the scribes or *soferim*, or he might go to them from the *hazzan*. He will not learn Greek, nor get any knowledge of Greek culture. Very likely he will hear the proverb coupling "him who breeds swine and him who teaches his son the wisdom of the Greeks." He will know little of movements in the bosom of Judaism, some of which his own will much resemble. But he will hear of the Essenes, and some of their ideas about poverty and marriage and non-resistance will sink deep into his heart, and the maxims of Hillel, to whom he owes his spiritual paternity as to no other soul. Hillel becomes president of the great synagogue at Jerusalem some five and twenty years before the birth of Jesus. By the time that Jesus is a youth, his humane and serious and tender maxims will have travelled far and wide, and in them is the gist of the Sermon on the Mount and all the highest teaching of Jesus. Jesus will learn next to nothing of the general condition of the world, will have no idea of the power of Rome and the peace it has established everywhere throughout the civilized world. When he shall speak one day of "the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them," he will mean those impromptu cities,

Tiberias and Julias and Cesarea and Sebaste, which Herod has just built to prove his admiration for Roman civilization and his devotion to the family of Augustus. He will see these cities in his youth, but he will never care for them. He will only care for his simple Galilean villages, "confused medleys of cabins, of threshing-floors and wine-presses cut in the rock, of wells and tombs, of fig and olive trees." He will have the mind and heart of a Galilean as long as he lives. He will find it hard to agree with Marcus Aurelius that "even in a palace life may be well led." A Stoic-emperor will seem to him impossible. He will think of kings as people who wear fine clothes. His parables will swarm with charming impossibilities. His kings and mighty men will be like those of a fairy story, not like those of real life.

His parents, one or both, will go up to Jerusalem three times a year—a long way to church—to attend the three great feasts of the Passover and Pentecost and Tabernacles. Only the men are commanded to go, but the women are permitted. The children must be taken when they are twelve years old. As year after year Joseph comes back and talks about the Holy City, Jesus will long to go and see it for himself. He will dream about it day and night. At length his time will come. The pilgrims will assemble in some open place and will start off in high spirits, the women and children riding on mules, the men marching before them and behind to protect them against robbers. There will be banners waving, and the pilgrims

will sing a “psalm of degrees,” or steps, like the one hundred and twentieth or one hundred and thirty-fourth, as they wind slowly along. They have from eighty to ninety miles to go, and it will take them several days to make the journey. The last night they will rest at Jericho, and the next day go over the hills to Jerusalem, climbing at length the Mount of Olives, and from its top seeing the city, with its towers and palaces spread out before them. Then they will sing :

Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem !
Jerusalem, the city rebuilt,
The city that is joined together,
Whither the tribes go up,
The tribes of the Lord,
According to the law of Israel.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
They shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls,
And prosperity within thy palaces.

And singing still, the procession will go down into the valley through which runs the brook Kedron, past the Garden of Gethsemane, and under the great archway into the city.

How different from his own little Nazareth ! The houses seem all palaces ; the palace of Herod —the Temple—how trivial were all his dreams to the reality ! And then the great bazaars aglow with all the riches of Phenicia and the East, the Roman soldiers in their glittering armor, the crowds of foreigners, the multitude of scribes, and priests, and Levites, some of them in gorgeous vestments, the whole city “one great corporation

temple." Will all these things take the heart of the young Jesus in their snare? About as long, perhaps, as Rome, another corporation temple, took the heart of Luther. He will be astonished, dazed, but he will not be captivated. And as he comes up again and again, he will be more and more convinced that all this show and splendor is not religion. The spontaneity and freedom of his native Galilee has educated him to hate this glittering, arid formalism. Jerusalem will have for him an ever greater fascination; but it will be "the fascination that great souls ever feel in invading the jaws of sin and death." He will go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem. He will array himself—one tender, dauntless, indefatigable man—against that stronghold of dead formalism and tradition. The possibility, the certainty of his death will not repel him. Rather it will draw him like a magnet. How little do the good Mary and Joseph imagine that it will ever come to this when they set out with him on his first journey to the Holy City!

And it might not have come to this if, on the one hand, there had been only this "vast corporation temple," and on the other hand only the lovely Galilean landscape and the quiet work at Nazareth or Cana. But while Jesus is musing, the fire burns, not only in his own heart but in the hearts of multitudes besides. He follows the trade of his father, beginning his apprenticeship while he is still a child. Democracy was then unheard of, but in Judea it was no disgrace to be a manual laborer. "Many of the most eminent doctors of

the law were humble tradesmen. They were tent-makers, sandal-makers, weavers, carpenters, tanners, bakers, cooks."* If there was sometimes affectation here, it was on the right side. "Better to work hard than to fear God," was a Talmudic saying. Jesus does both, but is no doctor, no theologian; only a man desiring to erect the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and by this kingdom meaning simply a society dominated by the ideas of purity, and justice, and mutual tenderness, and helpfulness. All through his childhood, youth and early manhood, Judea is agitated from end to end with Messianic dreams and speculations. In Jerusalem and Samaria these dreams and speculations tended to glorify the law and to expectation of its unprecedented triumph. But in Galilee, which at this time was a caldron in which the most diverse elements were in ebullition, there was less of Saddusaic conservatism and of Pharisaic pedantry, and here the Messianic idea developed itself much more freely and with much greater energy. The Messiah's coming was the theme of universal talk and expectation. But in regard to the manner of his coming, and what his character would be, there were the most various opinions. Only of one thing all were certain—his coming could not be long delayed. Given a great moral purpose in the heart of Jesus, and it was impossible that he should not connect it with this Messianic expectation, that he should not ask, "Am not I, even I, the chosen

* Emanuel Deutsch.

one of Israel?" It was not as if there was a single definite, objective Messianic ideal by which he could measure his own spiritual aspiration. It was by his own ideal, to which all the better elements in psalm and prophecy and rabbinism had contributed, that he measured all the rest and found them wanting. His was the greatest and the simplest of them all. The secret of its being so was partly in that simple life of Nazareth. But for the most part it was hidden in those depths of organization where it is quite impossible for us to penetrate. It must forever be a mystery how the initial step in the profoundest revolution that the world has ever seen devolved upon a man so humble in his origin, so little noticed by his contemporaries, slurred over in a line or two by Josephus,* who evidently thought himself the more important person. But however it came to be so, his work once inwardly determined, the form of it will show at every step his Galilean training. "Everywhere does Galilee crop out in Jesus, as Scotland in Burns. The man who doesn't see this has no eyes in his head. He would not find the home-religion of Scotland in the 'Cotter's Saturday Night.' Open the gospels at will. They are redolent as new-mown hay with the perfume of the soil." It is the Galilean education that shapes every parable, that determines every metaphor; ay, that furnishes the ideal of that Kingdom of Heaven by which the soul of Jesus is entranced. The Kingdom of Heaven is a univer-

* If the whole passage be not an interpolation. If it is not, it has been grossly tampered with.

sal Galilee, without any hatreds or impurities or selfish greeds. And even when he hangs upon the cross, and cries out *Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani*, the words will be in his own Galilean dialect. He is a Galilean till the last.

I have no dogma to enforce by these considerations. I have only tried to show you by what scenes and forces Jesus was surrounded during his childhood and his youth. That these scenes and forces account for his immense and sacred personality, I do not pretend. That they affected it in various ways, there cannot be a particle of doubt, and a few of the more obvious I have tried to indicate.

It may be that some of you have been a little troubled, if not really pained, by the purely natural and human aspect of the picture which I have invited you to see. But, for myself, it is only in proportion as I am able to contemplate Jesus as a man among men, that he becomes at once vital and vitalizing to my spirit. For the most part, it is hard to penetrate into his real presence through the accumulation of obstacles that mistaken reverence and superstition have placed between him and the human soul. But when in some moment of greater force and courage I am able to do this, I find myself encountering the most unique, the most gracious personage in all the history of religion, a man whose dominant ideas never have been and never can be outgrown, the stoutest foe of dogmatism and formalism the world has ever seen, the stoutest advocate of "mere morality," and the most loving heart that ever beat in sympathy

with universal sorrow, suffering, and sin. His memory and inspiration will go about their work with least obstruction when we forswear our whining, supplicating manners, our abject subservience and self-contempt, and stand upon our feet, self-respecting and self-reverencing, that he may speak to us his brother-word of manly exhortation.

O LORD ! at Joseph's humble bench,
Thy hands did handle saw and plane ;
Thy hammer nails did drive and clench,—
Avoiding knot and humoring grain.

That thou didst seem, thou wast indeed ;
In sport thy tools thou didst not use ;
Nor, helping hind's or fisher's need,
The laborer's hire, too nice, refuse.

Lord, might I be but as a saw,
A plane, a chisel, in thy hand !—
No, Lord ! I take it back in awe—
Such prayer for me is far too grand.

I pray, O Master ! let me lie,
As on thy bench the favored wood ;
Thy saw, thy plane, thy chisel ply,
And work me into something good.

No, no : ambition, holy-high,
Urges for more than both to pray :
Come in, O gracious Force ! I cry—
O workman ! share my shed of clay.

Then I, at bench, or desk, or oar,
With last or needle, net or pen,
As thou in Nazareth of yore,
Shall do the Father's will again.

THE ANGEL SONG.

AN arbitrary criticism has attempted to separate the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke, those which contain the charming legends of the birth and infancy of Christ, from the gospels of which they form a part. Our own Andrews Norton, a professor in the Divinity School at Cambridge, a defender of the faith against what seemed to him in Mr. Emerson's great Address of 1838 "The latest form of Infidelity," although so careful and conservative, dealt with these chapters in this way. But I, for one, am very glad that subsequent critics, of equal scholarship and greater penetration, have decided that this method of dealing with these chapters is arbitrary and unwarrantable. The stories which they contain, however marvellous in their implications, do not differ in kind from scores of other marvellous stories scattered up and down through all the gospels. They do not differ in degree from a good many which Prof. Andrews Norton would have been very loth to spare from the New Testament. Eliminate from the four gospels everything that is marvellous,

and you reduce them to a half or smaller fraction of their present size, and to a still smaller fraction of their present interest. In order to retain them it is not, however, necessary to suppose that the events which are reported actually took place at any time. The stories are easily accounted for, their generation and men's faith in them, without resorting to the hypothesis of actual occurrence. All things considered, such stories were absolutely sure to be generated, and once generated, to be believed. The more marvellous a story was, the readier credence it obtained. Did the story reflect honor upon Jesus?—this was about the only test the early Christian critics brought to bear on any story that purported to be a true account of any incident of his career. If it did this, the more wonderful it was, the better. But because these stories of the birth and infancy of Jesus are beautiful legends and not actual history, is no reason why they should be expunged from the earliest Christian records. As Phryne's judges said, "She shall live and not die, because she is so beautiful," so let us say of these. Moreover, they have a distinct historical value, though not such as the popular supernaturalism ascribes to them. It is quite as important to know what was *thought* in the first Christian century as to know what was *done*. In reality these stories have nothing to tell us about the birth and infancy of Jesus, but they have a great deal to tell us about the birth and infancy of Christianity.

It is only so long as these stories are regarded as narratives of actual occurrences that they have

any power to harm. Once know them for what they are—the beautiful legends in which the early Christian consciousness embodied its ideas of the Messianic character of Jesus, legends whose growth involved no smallest atom of untruthfulness—once see them in this light, and they become forever precious. Who would expunge all that is unhistorical from the early history of Greece? I sometimes think that we could better spare the actual history of later times. And certainly there is many an undoubted fact in early Christian history that I would rather spare than legends which are as unhistorical as the herd-tending of Apollo, or the gathering of the Golden Fleece.

Peace on earth, good will to men! How can we but be glad that such a sentiment, worthy of being sung by angel-choirs, was rescued from oblivion and preserved for centuries in the forefront of the gospel history? A sentiment so pure and high might well be the salvation of any legend in which it is embedded. And who shall say that it has not been the sentiment that has preserved the legend, rather than the legend that has preserved the sentiment? For the honor of humanity I should be slow to doubt that this has been the order of causation. But whether it has been or not, the sentiment has been preserved, and though it did not prove prophetic of any immediate revolution in the habits of communities or men, and though not even yet does national or individual life embody its transcendent force, I dare believe that by the music of this angel-song the hearts of men have been allured to gentler ways

than they would else have known, that there would have been still less “peace on earth,” and still less “good will to men,” if the Christian world for eighteen centuries had not been confronted and rebuked by this ideal, however unattainable.

It would seem that any apologist for the gospel literature would unite with the most skeptical critic, and be only too happy, in remanding this “overture of the angels” from the sphere of fact to that of the imagination. For if the angel-singing was a supernatural fact, how sadly has its prophetic import* been belied by all the subsequent history of Christendom and of the world at large. Peace on earth! Does it look like it in Armenia and in the passes of the Balkans? Kars and Plevna, Batum and Erzerum—what jarring notes are these in such a song! Russia and Turkey stand confronted in as fierce a struggle as ever rallied all the desperate energies of men. And in the mean time half of England holds the other half in leash, each half impatient to be mingled in the deadly fray on one side or the other. Peace on earth! Does it look like it on our own Texan border, or where the Indian nurses his revenge, or where, across the ocean, millions of Frenchmen bide their time, when, having established the Republic or got the Empire back again, they may blot out the memory of Sedan in fuller streams of blood? Peace on earth! There was indeed some little show of it from Waterloo to the Crimean

* Even if translated, as by Dr. Noyes, “Peace on earth among men of good will.”

war. Europe was so exhausted by the Napoleonic wars that she needed almost half a century to gather up her energies for a new encounter. Harriet Martineau wrote a "History of the Peace," and lived to see it followed by two-and-twenty years of scarcely interrupted war; first, the Crimean, then the Franco-Austrian, then our own civil war—its battles counted by hundreds—then Austria's terrible humiliation at Sadowa, and next the Franco-Prussian war, so shortly followed by the present struggle, and, all along, the interstices filled up with various lesser wars. And this has been the history of the second half of the nineteenth century so far. But it has not been very different from the history of Christendom from the beginning of the Christian era. The saddest commentary on the angel-song that I have ever seen is the list of battles in Hadyn's Dictionary of Dates. For Christian times it is eleven columns long! Only the most important battles are mentioned, and of these there have been nearly 900, the most of them by Christian nations with each other. A dreadful satire this upon the "overture of the angels," as it has been called, considered as a supernatural prophecy. For, so considered, apparently, its fulfilment is as remote as ever. For some time before the birth of Jesus the world had been at peace, and it remained so for some time after, —a peace conquered by Augustus and maintained by his imperial successors. There has hardly been so long a respite since. And to-day behold the spectacle of one of the rarest scholars and most thoughtful preachers in the English church as-

suring us that Christianity adopted nationality, and in so doing adopted war ; that because there is no common government of nations war must go on *ad infinitum* ; that peace on earth is a chimera ; that it is not the end of Christianity to establish any such peace, but only "a peace of God that passeth understanding," beyond the boundaries of our present life. It may be so ; but for myself I would rather a thousand times over believe that Christianity had grandly hoped and gloriously striven for an impossible good than to belittle its ideal in order to convince myself that it has done all that it hoped to do in its initial hour.

The relations of Christianity and war have always been a favorite subject both with the apologists for Christianity and its would-be opponents. Speaking of wars of Christian nations with each other, the English churchman,* to whom I have just referred, says : "Nor is this mutual slaughter, by the law of the church, the slightest break in Christian union and fellowship." Though it were always so, the fact would not be one for Christians to be very proud of, but it is not always so. It has not always been so. Rather have the divisions of the Christian church been more prolific than almost any other cause of national divisions, national rivalries and wars. And of all wars, those which have grown out of religious differences and animosities have been the most cruelly desolating and destructive. It was in the fancied service of Christ that Philip

* J. B. Mozley, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and Canon of Christ Church.

II. endeavored to subdue the Netherlands, and that Louis XIV. waged so many sanguinary wars. In all its various ramifications, the Thirty Years' War, which left in Germany less than a quarter of the original homesteads, property, and population, was a war of Roman Catholics and Protestants against each other. It is often said of Christianity, to its discredit, that it has done nothing to make good the promise of the prophetic angels—peace on earth—but, alas! there is a sadder truth than this behind. It is that organized Christianity, ecclesiastical Christianity, has been the most prolific cause of international and civil wars. It was this quite as much before the Protestant schism as it has been since. For before the Protestant schism there were various papal schisms, and the main business of the rival popes was to stir up the nations of Europe to fight for their supremacy. Even in these last days there are not wanting those who felicitate themselves upon the fact that the present Eastern conflict is a conflict between Christianity and Islam. An Episcopalian bishop of Western New York has written a crusader's song about it, in which the reigning Czar appears as the natural successor of St. Louis, and Godfrey de Bouillon, and Richard Cœur de Lion. And as, on a previous occasion, I expressed my sympathy with Russia in no measured terms, I owe it to myself to say in this connection that my sympathy with her is not of Bishop Coxe's sort. As for the Christianity of Russia and the Mohammedanism of Turkey, I am inclined to think the latter the more spiritual religion of the

two; the more moral and more genuinely worshipful. My sympathy with Russia is based on my conviction that Russian government is synonymous with progress, while that of Turkey is synonymous with stagnation, if not with retrogression. The promises of reformation with which she is now endeavoring to bribe the interference of the western powers are precisely on a par with the sick devil's resolution to become a monk. When he got well asceticism had for him no charms.

So, then, considered as a supernatural prophecy, the angel-song has been immeasurably disappointed; so far at any rate as its first clause is concerned. The Christian centuries so far have not been witnesses of peace on earth. Christianity in its historic manifestation has not prevented war, and, what is still more sad, in its organized capacity it has fomented it with unexampled vigor. But what has its relation been to the succeeding clause,—“good will to men.” Has this been the outcome of historic Christianity? The grinding competition of the market, the savage animosities of the political arena, the angry bickering of a thousand rival sects, united only in their common hatred of the dawning light of reason and the new day of science—do these phenomena suggest an affirmative reply? And turning from the present to the past, there is an aspect of Christian civilization infinitely sadder than that of war, even of war between Christian nations, inspired by mutual zeal for Christian truth. It is the aspect of religious persecution. There is, perhaps, no easier

death to die than in the front of battle. "The fear of death," says Montaigne, "is got rid of by dying in company." The excitement of the battle fills the mind. It is the most powerful anaesthetic. How different the strain of solitary suffering in loathsome dungeons, in the torture-chambers of the Inquisition, or at the martyr's flame-enveloped stake! Good will to men! Oh! what a painful commentary on these blessed words has been the history of Christian persecution! And how ironical! "Believe as I do, or I will kill you," has been the antistrophe of ecclesiastical Christianity to that divine strophe of the angelic choir. If only she would have killed outright! That would have been a mercy. But what she did was to devise every imaginable form of torment that might haply force a man to make the orthodox confession. Her emissaries skinned their victim to the waist, and then let loose a nest of hornets on his bleeding flesh, or sprinkled it with brine! Thank heaven such things are possible no longer. But where the churches can no longer persecute, they can still hate as passionately as ever, and fancy that they have the highest warrant for so doing: "Do not I hate them that hate thee, O God?"

The history of persecution for opinion must ever be regarded as the darkest blot upon the history of Christianity. But it is by no means exhaustive of this history. Organized Christianity has done other things than persecute, some of which have caused a lingering wretchedness and pain less tolerable than the acutest agonies of in-

quisitorial torment. For more than half of its career organized Christianity has been avowedly ascetic, and as such its good will to men has been a blight upon their faculties, the ruin of their joy. It has emaciated their bodies, and made them loathsome with self-inflicted scars or horrible with dirt. It has enfeebled their minds. It has crushed out their affections with an iron hand, compelling men and women to forego their natural paternal rights, desecrating all other births to consecrate the birth of Jesus, dishonoring all other women to make good his mother's claim to special purity. I fear that we shall be compelled to say that Christianity, in its historic manifestation, has availed even less to establish "good will toward men" than "peace on earth." Peace on earth, good will toward men: considered as a supernatural prophecy, never was prophecy more miserably belied by subsequent events than this has been through all the course of Christian history.

Yet not that organized Christianity has not encouraged its constituent members to good-will, and met with good success in its endeavors. Every religion has its pet virtues, and the pet virtue of Christianity for fifteen centuries was, and the pet virtue of Roman Catholic Christianity and of all ritualistic Christianity unto this day is, charity. Good-will to men has been synonymous with this, well-nigh to the exclusion of all other meanings. The legends of the saints turn oftener on this than on any other theme. Incalculable has been the good which has been thus occa-

sioned. Incalculable the evil also. And it may well be doubted whether the evil has not far outweighed the good. So necessary was poverty as a ground for charity to work upon, that poverty became a virtue, and mendicancy more honorable than the most efficient toil. Where there is the most charity there is always the most poverty. They are related as cause and effect. Mediæval Christianity and social science may agree in calling poverty a necessary evil, but it makes a vast and all-important difference whether by "necessary" we mean necessary to the display of saintly virtue, or necessary to the present undeveloped condition of society. The former is the mediæval Christian and the latter is the modern scientific meaning, rapidly tending to become the modern Christian meaning also, and as such to control ecclesiastical charity and to make it a hundred times less sentimental and a hundred times more wise and helpful and beneficent.

How then? Because the organized religion of the Christian centuries has laughed to scorn the angel prophecy, has any thing been taken from its worth? Every thing considering it as a supernatural prophecy, a prophecy which actual angels actually sang and actual shepherds actually heard. Everything so considering it. But nothing considering it, as in all wisdom and prudence we are bound to consider it, as the aspiration of a human heart,—of many human hearts; for no one man ever made such a beautiful legend,—projected on the scale of the imagination, on the void of Messianic longing, hope, and trust. Ay, thus considered,

the unfulfilment of the prophecy becomes its crown of honor. It is only very petty prophecies that are immediately or soon fulfilled. The greatest, the best, are sometimes never fulfilled at all, and if at all, they must wait for their fulfilment hundreds and thousands of years. Because the angel-prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, is no reason why it shall not be yet. I know that its vindicator liveth, and that he will yet stand upon the earth. If it has failed so far of fulfilment, it is only because it was too grand a prophecy for eighteen hundred years to realize. Give it another thousand before you point at it the slow, unmoving finger of scorn. But was it not the thought of those who wrote it first that it was destined to immediate fulfilment? Very likely it was: quite certainly. But is it, then, so reprehensible a thing to hope for that to-morrow which only the distant ages can reveal? I cannot think so. For one man who is too hopeful of the future, I find a hundred on my round who are not hopeful enough. The men who had this hope, perhaps, were seriously disappointed. But still I count them fortunate in comparison with their less hopeful contemporaries, or even with our own, and wiser, too, than the distinguished English churchman who believes that war is going to last forever. Non-fulfilment may be the disgrace of a supernatural prophecy *as such*, while it is but the glory of a simply natural and human prophecy, inspired by the moral sentiment and expressed in terms of the imagination.

Because this prophecy has failed of actual ful-

filment, we are not, however, obliged to say that Christianity has failed to justify the hopes of its original founders. "I came not to bring peace, but a sword," said Jesus, foreseeing that his new ideas would not force their way without much opposition, and that, as ever in the advance of truth, a man's foes would be those of his own household. "If it be possible," said the Apostle Paul, "as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." It is therefore evident that he anticipated a certain amount of necessary conflict. But these isolated texts are nothing in comparison with the persuasion which is interwoven with almost every chapter in the New Testament, that the present order of the world was soon to come to an abrupt conclusion. The history of Christianity has not disappointed its original founders because they did not think that it was going to have a history. Their time-view was contracted by the horizon of their hope of an impending world-catastrophe, which happening, the dead should be raised incorruptible, and the living should be changed. What the ethics of the New Testament would have been but for this hope, we cannot say. But what they are was evidently determined by this hope to a considerable extent. The Jesus of Matthew teaches nothing more simply and frankly than a doctrine of unqualified non-resistance. "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." But in another connection he declares: "My kingdom is not of this world, *else* would my servants fight" —an ample justification, so far as the New Testa-

ment is concerned, for the German Kaiser and the Russian Czar. Nothing is plainer than that the early Christians were communists, pure and simple; but would they have been if they had not expected an immediate catastrophe, any more than Paul would have prohibited marriage to all except the grossly passionate, but for this expectation? And we may even doubt if any ear of man would ever have heard the heavens of his imagination echo with the angel-song of "Peace on earth, good-will toward men," if he had known that in this nineteenth century after him we should be living here upon an earth, never as yet renewed by any miracle, but only by the everlasting order of the universe and the perpetual incoming of the fresh, new generations to fill up the places of the old.

And as we may not say that historic Christianity has disappointed the high hopes of its original founders, seeing that they anticipated for it no proper history at all, so we may not say that Christian history has proved the inadequacy of Christianity for the renovation of society, the establishment of peace on earth, and of good-will toward men. "Christianity is a failure," says my friend Abbot. "It has never been tried," retorts a Methodist minister, and has, it seems to me, the better of the argument. Men praise the Sermon on the Mount. But do they take no thought for the morrow? Smitten upon one cheek, do they turn the other to the smiter? Do they give to all who ask of them? And when their coats are stolen, do they run after the stealer with their

cloaks? If men really admired the Sermon on the Mount as much as they pretend to, they would do all these things. But they do no one of them. They take thought, not only for the morrow, but days and weeks and months ahead. Whosoever smites them on the right cheek, they turn—him over to the policeman and the county jail. How ever liberal, they do not give to all who ask of them, nor make a present of their next best over-coat to the hall-thief who has taken off their best. The Methodist minister was right. Christianity has never been tried. At least, it is not being tried in nineteenth-century Christendom. Men praise the Sermon on the Mount and live in flagrant violation of its most obvious commands.

Evidently there is something here as wrong as possible. But what is it? Ought we to regulate our lives by the preceptive teachings of the Sermon on the Mount? If we ought to, then in God's name let us do it bravely and manfully. If we ought not to, then let us cease to talk about the Bible as "our only rule of faith and practice," and cease from speaking with indiscriminate praise of that which we do not pretend to follow. In one way or the other, let us put an end to this disgraceful schism between creed and conduct, which has so lately made our nineteenth-century America the proper scorn of an intelligent Buddhist traveller, who has made a careful study of our social and religious life.

Peace on earth, good-will to men. It was not the fault of early Christianity that this angel song did not allure the hearts of men to make its words

the binding ordinance of all their individual and social life. Ideas do not propagate themselves. They must become incarnated in men in order to be propagated. And once announced, if men do not embody them in life they are not thus dishonored. It is the life that is dishonored which refuses to embody them, once it perceives them to be high and pure. That angel-song has always judged the world, and judges it to-day, and is itself judged of no man. And as early Christianity is not to be held responsible for the failure of the centuries to embody this ideal, so is not organized Christianity at any stage of its career. Men speak of organized Christianity as if it were an entity apart from all the other forces in the world, and not in any way affected by these forces. But organized Christianity, at every stage of its career, has been a human manufacture. Has it been good and useful, men have made it so. Has it been bad and hurtful, they have made it so. And, therefore, let it never be forgotten that, in blaming organized Christianity, we are always blaming men—the men who have organized it, and not, as many seem to think, a mere abstraction. Meanest of all procedures is it to roll back all the enormities and follies of the Christian Church for eighteen centuries upon the head of Jesus. Doubtless there have been wasteful errors based upon obvious and fair interpretations of his words as they appear in the New Testament. But what reason have the Christian centuries had to found their creeds and systems upon words spoken to meet the exigency of the passing time, and never for

one moment meant to fix the creed and conduct of the world for centuries after they were spoken?

We are too apt to talk as if theoretic Christianity had made the practical Christianity of men, and to forget that their practical Christianity, the sum of their characters, has made theoretical Christianity, has moulded and remoulded it a thousand times. Why has not Christianity availed to establish peace on earth, good-will toward men? Mainly, I think, because of the hardness of men's hearts. It is assumed that but for Christianity we should have had long before this the reign of light and love. It is safe to assume it, because it cannot possibly be disproved. But no more can it be proved. The past is past. We cannot recast it without Christianity to find out what the difference would be from what we have attained. But this I know, that there are a thousand evils which a crass and vulgar liberalism ascribes to Christianity which would have been just as conspicuous in the history of the world if there had been no Christianity. For men have made the forms of Christian thought and organization the receptacles of their folly and stupidity and hate and bitterness. If they had not had these receptacles, they would have had others just as capacious. If they had not quarrelled about *homoöusian* and *homoiousian*, they would have quarrelled about something else just as ridiculous. If they had not written the Athanasian Creed they would have written some other equally incomprehensible. If they had not burned men to death for not believing in the Trinity, they would have burned them

to death for not believing something else. Human nature and not Christianity, written or organized, is responsible for these vagaries, these follies, these enormities. Nor should we let our sorrow for the various ills of war and persecution and ascetic torture, which have been the direct outcome of organized Christianity, blind us to the fact that organized Christianity has been, for all its crimes and follies, a source of manifold and inestimable blessing to mankind. Side by side with war and persecution and ascetic torture, it has nursed the tenderest humanities. The horrid pomps of the arena vanished at its coming. A new regard for man, a new respect for woman, a new consideration for the slave, was everywhere the sign that a new order had been established in society. For centuries, too, the church was the attorney of the poor and humble against the rich and arrogant. For every gentler virtue the organized Christianity of Europe until the eleventh century had a word of cheer, an arm of strength, a breast of consolation.

Here we might let the matter rest, if the relation of Christianity to the world were wholly its relation to national and ecclesiastical organizations. But it has also its relations, and has had, to the individual life of men. And who shall say how great its influence has been upon the individual mind and heart? Even though the New Testament has been the common property of all for only about three centuries, "a man cannot be hid;" and there was a man there in the New Testament, the man whose birth we cannot celebrate

too joyfully, who could not be hid by any system of ecclesiastical withholding. A hundred chinks in the enclosing wall by which the priest endeavored to conceal him from mankind let through his tender radiance. Never has there been absent from the Christian world the ideal of a manhood noble and serene, a manhood all compact of gentleness and love, enamored of all righteousness, but with a heart full of encouragement for every wandering and sinful brother-man. I may be told that there are sentences in the New Testament which do not harmonize with this ideal. But the natural man is not a critic or a harmonist. He pounces upon his own wherever he finds it. And this ideal was his own ; his by divine right of appreciation, sympathy, and admiration. What matter if the creeds declared this man to be a god? This did not make the ideal beauty of his character, once perceived, a whit less authoritative than it would otherwise have been. For, once perceived, the ideal from that moment is a law unto our life, a law we disobey on pain of inward condemnation.

The angel-song is not, to be sure, a compendious history of Christendom. Peace on earth, good-will to men : there has been a plentiful lack of both. But who shall say the lack would not have been infinitely greater if this song had not expressed the essential quality of the life of Jesus—a quality infinitely transcending all his special moods of thought and special theories of life? I cannot doubt that, far as Christendom has fallen short of the ideal of that angel singing, it would have fallen short a hundred, ay, a thousand times

farther, if for eighteen centuries the holy tenderness of Jesus had not rebuked its cruelty and hate, its injustice and oppression.

Peace on earth, good-will to men! The day is still remote when this prophetic utterance of some yearning heart shall be the acknowledged law of human life, and so obeyed that it shall also be a compend of our national and social methods of well-being. War is a great evil. But there are some things infinitely worse than war, for the correction of which war is, although a clumsy instrument, the best which has so far been fashioned. War is no local malady, but a systemic disease, which can be reached only by systemic remedies. It is the source of many evils, but also of much good; of an unspeakable courage and devotion.

"Though love repine and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply :
'Tis man's perdition to be safe
When for the truth he ought to die.'

And though apparently the amount of war does not diminish with the lapse of centuries, its occasions grow more and more solemn, and the powers that hasten to alleviate its miseries are getting every year more potent, sweet, and wise. And never since the infant Jesus nestled in his mother's arms has there been so much good-will to men as now inspires the heart of Christendom. I do not cite in proof the effervescent sympathies which this kindly season* everywhere promotes, but rather the in-

* This sermon was preached just before Christmas.

numerable agencies which are being set on foot for the *prevention* of poverty and crime. To-day, good-will to men is something more than the old-fashioned charity—an opportunity for saints to manifest their saintliness. It is the will to make men self-supporting, self-respecting ; to see to it, if possible, that in feeding hungry bodies we do not starve still hungrier souls. Good-will to men ? It is no mere complacency ; no mere good-natured acquiescence in the crimes and follies of our fellow-citizens. It is uncompromising hate of every thing in ourselves and in each other that is foul and dark ; it is to summon the good in the depths of our own lives with firmest courage, and to lay hold upon the good in other men with overmastering sympathy.

Peace *on earth*, good-will to men ! Let who will postpone the reign of these beatitudes to the invisible future, and abandon the attempt to make them here and now the sacred ordinance of life, O friends, let not your souls be joined to their assembly ! Peace *on earth* : that was the angel-song. To establish the kingdom of heaven *upon earth* ; that was the dream which would not let the son of Joseph sleep. Long may this song and dream rebuke the selfish other-worldliness of men ! Not in your day or mine shall much-enduring man attain to such a glorious consummation ; it may be not for centuries or millennia. And yet I cannot doubt that it will come one day, and that it will come a little sooner for every word of truth we speak, for every act of kindness that we do, for

every base temptation that we spurn away, for every generous aspiration that we welcome to our hearts.

“ My song, save this, has little worth ;
I lay the weary pen aside,
And wish you health and love and mirth,
As fits the solemn Christmas-tide.
As fits the holy Christmas birth,
Be this, good friends, our carol still,
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will.”

IMMORTAL LIFE.

A PERSONAL and conscious immortality is not the only means of living after death. There are other ways of living after death that are an absolute certainty. And some of these ways are universal; they belong to man as such; they are inseparable from his natural constitution. But others of these ways depend on individual development. There are forms of life after death that are possible for some men, but are not possible for all. From time to time, as earnest, thoughtful men have, by no fault of their own, but by some irresistible direction of their thought, become afflicted with a doubt of personal continuance when this present life is over, they have endeavored to console themselves with the assurance that without conscious immortality there is still an after-life of wonderful significance. In but few instances, however, I imagine, has the endeavor been attended with any great success. Whatever of nobility or deep significance may inhere in such forms of immortality as are still

possible when personal and conscious immortality is gone, they are not, any one of them or all of them together, a substitute for this. When we have lost our sight, our hearing is preternaturally developed; but that it is a substitute for it, even when so developed, who would be willing to declare? We may be more grateful than ever for our hearing, but every day's experience convinces us anew of the appalling character of our misfortune. And the great majority of men, though feeling sure of an undying fame, or influence, or affection, or organic perpetuity in the life of their posterity, would still be none the less, but rather all the more, desirous to resume beyond the solemn boundary which we call death the functions of a personal and conscious life.

But I desire to speak to you this morning of other forms of immortality than this of personal and conscious life beyond the grave, in no tone of disparagement or comparative disrespect, or even vivid contrast with this form, which many think alone is worthy of the name of immortality. I desire to carefully consider these other forms of immortality with you—those which are for the few and those which are for many or for all—and see what they import.

Consider first the immortality of fame. "If a man die, shall he live again?"* Yes, certainly, if he has said some word or done some thing sufficient to perpetuate his name and fame through coming generations. This sort of immortality

* Job 14:14.

occupied a great place in the opinion of the Roman world before the time of Christianity. The literature of the later commonwealth and early empire is full of talk of immortality, which, when you come to examine it, proves to have nothing to do with an immortality of conscious life, but only with the making of a name that shall outlast our mortal habitation. Perhaps the orations of Cicero are as good an example as can be had of the way in which the Roman mind fastened itself upon this notion of the immortality of fame. Those of you who have read them must remember how frequently the thought of Cicero recurs to this theme, and how affectionately he dwells upon it. But the most beautiful expression of this sort, which I can now recall, occurs in the *Agricola* of Tacitus, one of the noblest monuments of ancient literature. “If there is any dwelling-place for the spirits of the just,” he says; “if, as the wise believe, noble souls do not perish with the body, rest thou in peace, and call us thy family from weak regrets and womanish laments to the contemplation of thy virtues, for which we must not weep nor beat the breast. Let us honor thee, not so much with transitory praises as with our reverence, and if our powers permit us, with our emulation. That will be true respect, that the true affection of thy nearest kin. This, too, is what I would enjoin on daughter and wife, to honor the memory of that father, that husband, by pondering in their hearts all his words and acts, by cherishing the features and

lineaments of his character, rather than those of his person. It is not that I would forbid the likenesses which are wrought in marble or in bronze; but as the faces of men so all the similitudes of the face are weak and perishable things, while the fashion of the soul is everlasting, such as may be expressed, not in some foreign substance or by the help of art, but in our own lives. Whatever we loved in Agricola survives [mark you] and will survive in the hearts of men, in the succession of the ages, in the fame that waits on noble deeds. Over many indeed of those who have gone before, as over the inglorious and ignoble, the waves of oblivion will roll. Agricola, made known to posterity by history and tradition, will live forever." You will notice that at the beginning of this passage there is a distinct recognition of a conscious immortality, but you will also notice how entirely subordinate it is to the immortality of fame. This the historian reserves for the climax of his noble panegyric. And let us not be hasty to condemn, as utterly selfish and unworthy, this longing of the Roman thinkers and heroes for an immortality of fame. Certainly, it is far less selfish than the average Christian longing for an immortality beyond the grave. This asks for an eternity of bliss as payment for belief in a few propositions or for a certain spasm of emotional experience. The other asks, as reward for a long life of strenuous endeavor in the cause of virtue, that one's name may be held in lasting and affectionate remembrance. Doubtless this was not

the highest motive possible. But it was no paltry, no ignoble one.

But how few there are in any generation who without presumption can anticipate for themselves the immortality of fame! Well said the poet, “One of the *few* immortal names that were not born to die.” Ay, very few indeed. Richard Grant White attempted a few years ago to make out a list of the immortal names of literature. It was not a very long one, and it contained some names of doubtful immortality. There is something really pitiful in the evanescence of contemporary fame. Poor Robert Southey, poet laureate of England, flattered himself all his life long that his would be one of the everlasting names, and now the “Battle of Blenheim” and “The Inchcape Rock” are about all that is left of him. Bowles, brother-in-law of Southey, was a famous poet in his day. Coleridge made fifty MS. copies of his verses to distribute among his friends, being too poor to buy the printed books. But who reads his verses now? Well sings the present laureate:

“ What hope is there for modern rhyme
To him who turns a musing eye
On songs and deeds and lives that lie
Foreshortened in the tract of time ?”

But the fame of literary men is not different from any other fame. The most of it is of very short duration. Only a few names are handed on from age to age. If there were no other immortality than this, the question, “If a man die, shall he

live again?" would have to be answered, Not in one case out of a hundred thousand.

" We pass : the path that each man trod
Is dim or will be dim with weeds ;
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age ?"

Another way of living after we are dead is the way of Influence. At first glance, this may seem to be only another word for fame. But in fact it is something very different. The two things may go together, but they are quite distinct. Fame is for the few. Influence is for the many. May we not say that in some slight degree, for good or bad, it is for all? " No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." With all fame there goes along a certain influence. The fame of the warrior incites to warlike deeds. The fame of the saint to things saintly. The fame of the discoverers makes new Franklins, and Columbuses, and Livingstones. The fame of the inventors new Stephensons, and Jacksons, and Morses, and Daguerres. But the greatness of fame, its far-reachingness, its perpetuity, is no measure of its influence. Take for example the greatest fame that ever has been won—that of the man of Nazareth. His too, no doubt, has been the greatest influence that has ever been exerted by mortal man. But the influence has not been commensurate with the fame. Would that it might have been! How different the history of Christianity would have been! In fact, his fame and influence have been opposed to each other. Where

his fame has been greatest, his influence has been least. To nurse the fame of Jesus, and to negative his influence as much as possible, has been the unconscious aim of all the great Christian communions. "Depart from me; I never knew you," he might well say to every one of them. What harmony between the absolute simplicity of his character and speech, and the complexities of their ritual and doctrine? What harmony between the "sweet reasonableness" of his teachings and the irrationality and absurdity of the prevailing creeds?

There may be a great fame where all that justifies it is entirely a matter of the past; it may have been only a single action. Indeed, fame almost always goes along with action. The most famous men are the men of action: the fighters, the discoverers, the inventors, the reformers. The men of thought, as a general thing, have less fame than these, but they have more influence. For by influence I mean that which is consciously felt by one person as coming from another. There are unconscious influences of which we have yet to speak. The great means by which influence perpetuates itself is literature. If a man die he shall live again, if he has written a book which can outlive him. A man is as immortal as his book, provided that his book is still alive and operative after he has gone away. Judged by this standard, the immortals are not many. The Imperial Library in Paris, the greatest library in the world, contains about a million volumes. But a great many of these books are just as dead as dead can be.

Few indeed are the books which outlive those who write them. Children of this sort almost always die before their parents. If the immortality of influence were only for those who are able to write something that shall have enduring life, there would be very few indeed to possess it.

But it is not for these alone. There are millions for whom the after-life of fame is an impossible thing, for whom an after-life of influence is possible. I say an after-life. I do not dare to say an immortality, speaking, as I am, of influence consciously felt. For such influence is not apt to outlast many generations. The fathers and mothers live before their children lives that are all integrity, and purity, and blamelessness. They pass away and their children remember all the gracious beauty of their lives, and love to speak about it to their children in serene and quiet hours. And so they become “the sweet presence of a good diffused.” But can we add, as does George Eliot:

“And in diffusion ever more intense”?

I fear that we can not. I fear that every life, so far at least as its influence consciously felt is concerned, is like the pebble that we cast into the water. Ever fainter and fainter from the centre grow the undulations. If any of you want to exercise an influence for good, I would advise you to exercise it now, and not trust too much to exercising it after you are dead and gone. Then, indeed, for a few years, it may be for a few generations, the torch will go from hand to hand; but it will burn ever fainter and fainter, and at length will quite

go out. Let us work while the day lasts, for behold the night cometh.

Another way of living after apparent death is the way of Affection. This sort of immortality is not apt to be much prolonged, but it is very general. It is not apt to be much longer than the lifetime of those persons who have known us personally, and whose affection we have elicited by immediate contact. To speak of love where there has been no such immediate contact, is to speak metaphorically, rather than with a nice regard for truth. "Whom not having seen we love," is an expression that it is very dear to us, and it covers an important fact; but the fact is, that our reverence has been excited, our admiration claimed, for certain qualities of mind, and heart, and will. Affection pure and simple does not exist. For this can exist only between persons who actually know each other, or have actually known each other. The most that we can mean by saying that we love some person whom we have never seen, is, that we feel sure that we *should* love such a person if we could come into actual contact with him. Vividness of imagination has a great deal to do with the intensity and pleasure of this feeling. The powerful novelist or dramatist makes his characters so real that we can hardly convince ourselves that we do not actually know them. The men and women whom we actually know are thin and spectral in comparison. We expect to meet Maggie, or Romola, or Tessa, or Dorothea, on the street, and if the choir should sing "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the

righteous forsaken and his seed begging bread," we should involuntarily look around to see if Col. Newcome wasn't sitting near us with bowed head, the great chant rolling over him. And still the real Valhalla of affection is inhabited for each individual, only by those whom he has personally known and personally loved. In our father's house are many mansions. We have, each one of us, a little heaven of our own, inhabited by dear ones whom we have known and loved, with whom we love to draw apart in our best hours, or when we are tired and troubled, and it is good to seem to feel their hands upon our foreheads, and to seem to hear their well-remembered tones. This heaven of affection is the children's heaven. This immortality is theirs—the children's who have gone away from us. They have no fame. Strictly speaking, they have no influence. But how the fountains of affection bubble at their tiny feet! And the time they have lived with us in their dainty little tabernacles of soft flesh is no measure of, has no correspondence with, the after-life they live in our affectionate remembrance. In the pure heaven of many a fond mother's heart there lives some little one whose actual earthly life was but a few months long. A few *months* long! I know well of one of these little immortals, "whose names are written in heaven," who only for a few short hours looked out upon this earthly pageantry, and then slipped back into the silences, and she to whom he came keeps him in mind continually, and can not speak of him without a sudden rush of tears, and is drawn to all young men and draws them to her

by this fine chord of thinking and wondering what manner of young manhood her own brief visitor would have reached if he had tarried until now. Truly this heaven of affection is a pure, sweet heaven. This immortality, though it be nothing to the immortal, is much to those who stay behind them on “this bank and shoal of time.” But it is something to the immortals. It is much. I do not mean to them in their new conscious life, though I believe that too—believe that conscious immortality is sweetened by the thought of earthly recollection. But what I mean now is, that while we are here it is something, it is much, to look forward to that immortality of affectionate remembrance which will be ours just in the measure of the affection we inspire by an unselfish, tender, helpful, and considerate life. Who would not rather have a generation of such immortality than a century, an age of fame? Its heaven is not so grand, but it is much more home-like. May we all attain to it some day!

There is still another sort of immortality, which demands our carefullest consideration. It is a real immortality, not merely an after-life, which continues, like the after-life of the most persistent fame, for a millennium or two, or like the after-life of influence or affection, for one or two brief generations. It is as enduring as the structure of society. And it is as universal as it is everlasting. No human being is exempt from it. It is not, like the after-life of fame, for a few chosen ones; nor, like the after-life of conscious influence, dependent on some monument of heroic action or impressive

thought, nor, like the after-life of affection, conditioned by our voluntary love and carefulness. It is absolutely universal. The famous and unfamed, the wise and foolish, the good and bad, alike partake of it. You know by this time what immortality it is that I am thinking of. It is the immortality of organic perpetuity—physical and social organic perpetuity. Its import is, that to the remotest generations the life which we are living now will be a factor in the great problem of human destiny. The world has never been without some apprehension of this truth. “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge ;” this proverb is one expression of it, and another of the same import is, “The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generations.” The Hindu expressed it in his doctrine of Fate, or, as he called it, Karma, which he defined as the deeds committed in a former state of existence. The Greek expressed it in his doctrine of Nemesis, which assumes its highest form in the great trilogy of Oedipus. But it has been reserved for modern science to develop and illustrate this truth as it has never been developed or illustrated before. It has written hundreds of impressive sermons on the Bible text, but seldom or never quoted, “There shall be no more hence an infant of days, but the child shall die an hundred years old.” Say a thousand or ten thousand and it would be just as true. For it is the teaching of science, that every new-born child is an epitome of the preceding generations—that their experi-

ence is nicely registered upon "the fleshly tablets of his heart," upon the delicate tissues of his brain. John Locke succeeded admirably in demolishing the doctrine of innate ideas that was current in his day, but the science of the present time has more sympathy with that exploded error than with the doctrine which he substituted for it, namely, that the mind of every newborn child is a *tabula rasa*, a naked tablet, on which something is to be written for the first time. Say rather that every such mind is a palimpsest, with one thing written over another in an endless succession of inscriptions; that the fate and future of the child largely depend on which of these comes out into sharp visibility and legibility. The doctrine of innate ideas was the false and blundering expression of a mighty and impressive truth—a truth which Herbert Spencer and George Henry Lewes have done more to elucidate than all other writers with their wonderful and beautiful doctrine of experience, which reconciles opposing schools of thought by proving that the what are called necessary truths and intuitions are those truths and apprehensions that have been wrought into the inmost substance of the mind by an infinite succession of ante-natal experiences—experiences not of the immediate individual but of the race.

"Not in entire forgetfulness,
Nor yet in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

But there is spiritual as well as physical inheri-

tance. We bring a great deal with us, and we enter on a great estate the moment we arrive. Organization is only one factor in the determination of character. Social environment is another. It would be sad indeed if those who have no children after the flesh could have none after the spirit. But society is an organism as well as the human body. All that I say and do and am is registered upon this social organism, and is transmitted to an endless future. And so it happens that we are begotten of the spirit of the great ones of the past. They live in all the structure of society. Their life is ploughed into the world. We say of Washington, "God made him childless that a people might call him father." But the people might have called him father just as well if a score of children had risen up to call him blessed. As the Te Deum phrases it, "Thou dost give to us all to be born of the spirit."

The religion of Auguste Comte has very frequently been brought into sharp and unfavorable contrast with his philosophy. But for myself I doubt if there is any thing in his philosophy so well worth taking home to heart and life as his doctrine of organic social immortality, the after-life in us of those who have preceded us, the after-life we are to live in those who follow us. It is a wonderful thought. It is a thought full of inspiration. It inspires us with gratitude and high resolve. We are so different, and all the world about us is so different, because of those who have preceded us, that we are put upon our honor to

live our lives in such a sacred fashion that our after-life, not only in those who are our physical inheritors, but in the whole community, shall be something healing and helpful. A thought like this gives a pathetic interest to our most ancient ancestry, the men of the old stone age, who used such chips as they could find to serve them; the men of the new stone age, who chipped the chips into more serviceable shapes. We feel our fellowship with these. The beginning of steam engines and electric telegraphs was in their rude endeavors to subdue rebellious nature to their will. But as with these crudest things so with the finest. The soul of the first man who blew upon a reed, and heard a sound that made him blow again, lives now in every organ that dissolves our being in its flood of harmony, ay, and the soul of every man who added reed to reed until religion had its proper instrument, until the sorrow and the aspiration of the world had found an instrumental voice. How many patient souls attain organic perpetuity in the piano of to-day, souls of men who toiled over the virginal, the spinet, and the harpsichord until the perfect wonder came. Nay, who shall dare to call it perfect yet? I went to the concert a few nights ago, and sat there listening with rapture to that spell the violinist wove out of the viewless air. Much of the charm I know was resident in the brain of the performer, much also in the brain of the composer, whose feeling he interpreted, but much remains to credit to the men

whose thought and patience have produced the violin, and especially to him,

“That plain white-aproned man who stood at work,
Patient and accurate, full fourscore years,
Cherished his sight and touch by temperance ;
And, since keen sense is love of perfectness,
Made perfect violins, the needed paths
To inspiration and high mastery.”

But as Antonio Stradivari lives in the violins men play upon to-day, so does the whole past of society live in the structure of society to-day, in all the food we eat, in all the clothes we wear, in all the houses that we live in, in all the furniture and ornaments which they contain, in all the music that we hear, and all the pictures that we see, and most of all in our own breathing selves. That “plain white-aproned man” stood there, in Cremona, a type of all the past ; his violin a type of all the present, to our best touch so eagerly responsive, because of all the temperance and patience of the innumerable generations of mankind.

But is the tale of immortality complete when all these chapters have been written—this resounding one of fame, this impressive one of influence, this tender one of affection, this inspiring one of social continuity ? Who of us would believe it if we could, or could believe it if we would ? Science itself forbids us to end here. It has its doctrine of the conservation of energy : that as no particle of matter can be destroyed, so no particle of force can be subtracted from that constant quantity which keeps the world in stable equilibrium. Now

then, suppose a Shakespeare, tired of the life of the metropolis, having made a snug fortune which he is pleasantly conscious of, and a fame world-wide and century-enduring, which he is hardly conscious of at all, goes back to Stratford with the hope of living there a quiet, comfortable life, when suddenly some malady swoops down upon him : he dies, and his dust is stored away under the little church in which he meant to be a decent worshipper. His is the immortality of fame, beyond a doubt : his too the immortality of influence wherever his deep words are sounded ; his too the immortality of affection, for we have reason to believe that he was a man most kind and lovable ; his too the immortality of social perpetuity, so deeply did he live himself into his own and each succeeding age. But here is no sufficient conservation of the energy that was still vital in him when disease and death arrived. All this had been provided for, and still the mighty intellect remained. Shall we follow the fortunes of the body, with the eye of our imagination, hoping to find, in any intimation what became of that, in certain gases, certain growths of vegetable and animal life, a sufficient conservation of the energy that could produce the mirth of Falstaff, the tenderness of Cordelia, the fascinating loveliness of Juliet, the graver charms of Portia and much-suffering Desdemona, the doubt of Hamlet, and the awful tragedy of Lear ? To think of such a thing is to confute it. But if the conservation of energy is indeed a law, if it runs all the way through

the world of matter and of spirit, as it must to be a law, then somehow and somewhere the souls, not only of the mighty ones of intellect and imagination, but of humble folk whose names are soon forgotten upon earth, are enabled to resume their conscious individual life.

But hold. The conservation of energy does not signify its continuous identity. The energy is oftenest conserved by transmutation. The heat becomes motion, or the motion heat. What if the soul's energy should also be transmuted? That would be immortality, but not the immortality with which we console ourselves when we have lost our friend. But what if the soul be untransmutable—a unit that can not be decomposed? Such was Plato's thought, and it has never been disproved. The psychologists have decomposed consciousness, or think they have; but that which is conscious they have not yet decomposed. I think they never can. This *Ego* is no spark struck out by the collision of our organism with an external world. The consciousness of self may be; is, doubtless. The conscious self is deeper than all this. Upon this rock we will build our hope, and nothing shall prevail against it.

"I fall back on my hope," says Dr. Bartol; "no demonstration, but a hope." But is it not a reasonable hope? Consider at what sources it is fed. One of these sources is intellect. It is the privilege of intellect to abolish death, not by its special arguments, but by its lofty manifestations, and its insatiable hunger for the truth. We demand a

future for the satisfaction of this hunger, for the survival of these lofty manifestations. We demand it? Itself makes the demand upon us. It is simply impossible to think the death of genius. It is unthinkable. It may have lived out the full term of life upon the earth; we claim for it another lease beyond. We claim it for Goethe dying at eighty-two, as unhesitatingly as for Keats dying at twenty-four. And as these men live in our thought, as we can never think of death and them together, as the thought of death always falls off from them, and leaves them standing as immortals in the temples of our faith, so when we enter into their thoughts and share with them their inspiration, we grow more deathless to ourselves; our potential faith in immortality grows actual, and floods our lives with an assurance brighter than the sun. The more intellect, the more faith. Let us hold reverent converse with great minds, if we would have our faith in the great future grow more clear and strong. The more we know, the less we seem to know. We crave a boundless opportunity. Ages upon ages will not appease our hunger after truth when it has once been fairly roused. It is objected to this way of thinking, that man has his meridian, and after he has reached it, begins to decline. But there is no meridian to our desire for knowledge, though there be to our capacity for acquiring it; and even if there were, the sun has its meridian, but that does not prevent its rising upon other lands when it has set to these. Its meridian is only relative to the earth, and the same thing is true of

the soul's meridian. Because it takes us twenty or thirty years to die, it no more follows that we do not live again, than if all of us were cut off in our prime. Enough that life at its longest is not long enough or complete enough to give us all the knowledge that we want. Enough that the more we make of this life the more we cry out for another; and if another do not await us, then God—or, if God, too, be an illusion—the universe has set a premium upon ignorance. It has set, too, in this event, another premium upon hardness, coldness, isolation, and misanthropy. These agree with the extinction of the soul, but love alone agrees with immortality. The more we love, the more immortal seem we to ourselves. The more love we see in other men and women, the more certain are we that their souls can never taste of death. There are some who love so much that, if we had never thought of immortality before, the thought would spring beneath their blessed feet, so quick to go upon the longest errands. And when affection is most sorely tried; when graves open at our feet, though they be very little graves, they are always large enough for entrance doors to heaven, always deep enough for artesian wells, that yield us from unfathomable depths the waters of ineffable desire.

There is a source of hope that nestles nearer heaven even than thought or love. It is in the awful presence of the moral law that the assurance of a future life intensifies most rapidly. The contemplation of good men brings heaven nearer

than the contemplation of any thing external to ourselves. Doing the will is the best way of all to know the doctrine. "If thou wouldest enter into life," the Master said, "keep the commandments." Keep the commandments: that is the one great clue that helps our thought to thread the labyrinth of death, and brings it out under a sky streaked with auroral intimations of continuous and ever larger life.

"I give you the end of a golden string :
 Only wind it into a ball ;
It will lead you in at the heavenly gate
 Set in Jerusalem's wall."

Do I hear that it is selfish, egotistic, this hatred of annihilation, this clamorous demand for further opportunity? Nickname it as you please, the fact remains that this demand, this hatred, thrives upon self-sacrifice and self-denial as upon no other food. It is all that is best in us, all that is purest, all that is most just and merciful, all that is most loving and tender and kind and sweet and true, that pleads with God for everlasting life. Not for reward, not for rest, not for mere happiness do we so plead, but only for some decent chance to fulfil the law of our being. We could change "earth" to "heaven" in Robert Browning's Easter-day, and cry—

" Be all of *heaven* a wilderness
 With darkness, hunger, toil, distress,
Only let me go on, go on."

But is it quite the thing for us to encourage in these ways our hope of a hereafter? Were it not

better to leave the long day of life where Brutus left the one day of Philippi, saying with him—

“ O that a man might know
The end of this day’s business ere it come !
But it sufficeth that the day will end,
And then the end is known.”

Ah ! but it is not we who go about deliberately to make our hope more eager, but it is made more eager in the natural order of our lives just in proportion as we seek great ends, live for the imperishable things of truth and love and righteousness. Can it be possible that there is such a contradiction at the inmost heart of things, that every higher thought or nobler act or purer purpose tends to immerse us deeper in a terrible delusion ? If the hope of immortality is organized in us more definitely by every higher thought or nobler act or purer purpose, is it not wise to think that this is so because there is some “ pre-established harmony ” between the hope and the great fact which waits our coming just beyond our farthest ken ? All the premiums of ignorance, of baseness, of shame and sin are heaped up on the side of doubt or flat denial. I sometimes wonder that any of us dare to hope for immortality. Not to hope for it would solve at once so many hideous problems. But we do dare—dare most when we are wisest, purest, gentlest, truest, best ; and it is because I know the world was ^Xmade for wisdom, purity, and gentleness, for truth and love and righteousness, that I must believe that we are meant for immortality. Else were

"the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" convicted of cheating us most sorely when we ally ourselves with it most eagerly. While I live I will never believe this; and then, if it be true, I never shall, for there will be nothing left of me than can believe.

Do I hear that immortality is too wonderful to be believed? If that were so, would our life here be credible? Might not an infant before birth think—if it could think—that birth is so wonderful that it is not believable, and after all be born? Is there possible a greater miracle than that we are here, held without effort to this flying ball, attended with all sorts of pageants and delights, and vested with the powers of thought and love and righteousness? There is nothing too wonderful to believe. We do not reject the miracles, so called, because they are too wonderful; no, but because they are not wonderful enough, because they seem so tawdry and so cheap that they are entirely out of keeping with the general make of things. If immortality is very wonderful, that is a presumption in its favor. The more wonderful any thing is in such a universe as this, so that it be really wonderful, the more likely is it to be true.

The vessel that carries us and flies this flag of an immortal hope, and nails it to the mast and keeps it there whatever tempests rave, what is it but this total life of ours? Our heart and our flesh cry out for the living God. It is life that affirms life. *Memento mori*—think of death—read the ancient gravestones, overgrown with lichens and half-sunken in the earth. *Think of*

life, says the new gospel, “ Think of it, drink of it, then, if you can,”—doubt its continuance. Be alive, be *all* alive, and then if you have time to think of death at all, you shall not think of it as a finality, but it shall be to you

“ Not so much even as the lifting of a latch,
Only a step into the open air
Out of a tent already luminous,
With light that shines through its transparent walls.”

I hate, by whomsoever broached, the theory that if there were no future life, our present life would lose all sacredness; the moral law would be abolished. For it would still remain to do the right and seek the true, and love the beautiful. I hate the narrowness which denies the possibility of virtue to men who are so constituted that their faculties vibrating in unison have never rendered those peculiar tones which we call God and immortality. Without these beliefs life can be intensely moral; it can be packed with justice and beneficence. But morality is not all, although it is the highest and the best. Joy is one grand constituent of a true life, and though without belief in God or immortality a man may be intensely moral, may display a heroism that would be impossible if his life were filled with those beliefs, his life without them can never be so round and full, so perfect in its symmetry, so free and joyous as if they were his constant friends and counsellors. Without them man is at best a splendid fragment. But only with them is his life entire. Without them he may have such joy as never

fails to wait on duty bravely done. But only with them is his path bathed in sunshine, and his life a happy and triumphant song.

For those to whom these great beliefs come with least effort, to whom they are the natural gestures of the soul, faith is not always at high tide. It has its ebb and flow. When most they need it, then it sets in most powerfully, fills every nook and cranny in the breast, effaces all the old tide-marks, and moistens places that have never known before its gracious ministry. And as for the most natural believers there are times of doubt, so for the most difficult there are times when the clouds are lifted away from the dark mountains and they see how sturdily they lift themselves towards the bright heavens that bathe them with all light and perfectness.

" And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein man doth forever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, Rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then he thinks he knows,
The hills where his life rose.
And the sea where it goes."

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

THE question which I shall discuss this morning, "The Sacred Scriptures: What are They?" is one which the majority of Christian people considers capable of but one answer, and that a very short and simple one: The Sacred Scriptures are the Old and New Testaments bound up together in what we call the Bible. The Roman Catholic would add, And those books contained in the so-called Apocrypha. But allowing for the present that the Sacred Scriptures are coextensive with the Old and New Testaments, the question next arises, What are the Old and New Testaments? What is their history, and what their character, that they should be regarded as sacred; and if sacred, to what extent and with what meaning are they so, and what is their relation to other books also esteemed sacred by various religionists beyond the pale of Christendom, and to so much of general literature as has, though never set apart in any formal way, for some of us a special sacredness, at least a very lofty spiritual significance? This is a large and complex question to discuss

within the limits of a single sermon, but I will do as well as I am able.

The common answer to the question, What is the Bible? is so familiar to you all that I need hardly mention it. To the great majority of Christian people it is a book written, as it were, by God's own hand. Its various authors were merely so many different amanuenses writing at the dictation of the Almighty. Therefore the result is absolutely unique. The contents of the Bible are infallible. They are homogeneous. From Genesis to Revelation there is one voice, one spirit, one doctrine, one theory and method of religion. The Bible differs not merely in degree but in kind from all other books. All other books are human; this only is divine. Such being its character, it is not to be judged by ordinary standards or criticised by ordinary methods. It judges all things, and is itself judged of no man. Not only religion, but history, politics, church government, natural science, each and all are to be measured by it, and to stand or fall according as they harmonize with it or fail of doing so. Such is the common answer to the question, What is the Bible?—the answer of the vast majority of Christian people. There are preachers here and there in evangelical pulpits, and scholars not a few, who would not subscribe to all of these particular statements. But compared with the whole Roman Catholic and Protestant world, they are as one to many thousands, and their influence is not perceptible upon the popular belief. Even within the ranks of orthodoxy there are preachers and

scholars who know that the above answer is not correct in any single particular. But the scholars find an audience mainly outside of the great orthodox inclosure, and the preachers who know better put their light under a measure instead of in a candlestick, so that but little of it gets abroad. To-day, in spite of all that biblical criticism has accomplished in all its arduous course from Calvin's time to ours,—for even Kuenen and Ewald are but Calvins of a larger growth,*—the common use of the Bible in evangelical pulpits, and the common estimation in which it is held by orthodox religionists, is only justified upon the supposition that the book is a *theography*, a god-writing, every word of it inspired and supernaturally true and sacred and divine.

Let us begin with the Bible in its most external form, and work our way back as carefully as possible and see if, as the Ganges was supposed to, it takes its rise in heaven or has its sources, as the Ganges has in fact, in mountains that take hold upon the solid earth. Take the Bible in the authorized English version. In popular belief and use, this is, *verbatim et literatim*, the *Word of God*, a supernatural revelation of his thought and will. Of course, the moment any one begins to think, this fancy vanishes forever, but the great majority of Christian people have not yet begun to think. Our English Bible is an *English* Bible, to begin with. But in its original form the Bible

* As critics, not as theologians. Calvin had many genuinely critical perceptions.

was part Hebrew and part Greek ; the Old Testament the former, and the New Testament the latter. Therefore the question arises, Is our English translation of the Bible an infallible translation ? For if not, our English Bible is not quite infallible. And the answer to this question is that our English translation, for all its marvellous beauty, grandeur, and simplicity, for all its mingled strength and tenderness, is doubtless incorrect, in hundreds of particulars, as a translation of the Hebrew and Greek text upon which it was based. Hugh Broughton, easily first of all the Hebrew scholars of his time, said of it that he "would rather be torn in pieces by wild horses than impose such a translation on the poor churches of England." From this translation date, for the most part, the chapter-headings and running titles of all the Bibles now in use among us. They have been tampered with more or less since 1611, but assumed at that time substantially their present form. But these chapter-headings and running titles have had a large degree of influence in determining the interpretation of the Bible, and have been commonly esteemed of equally divine authority with the body of the text. In fact, they represent the crude and fanciful ideas, theological and critical, of the seventeenth century, and a thousand times over impose upon the text meanings of which it is entirely innocent. And in this connection, it may be well to say that all the titles of different books in the New Testament, such as "The Gospel according to St. Matthew," are additions of the fifth or sixth century

after Christ, being absent from all the early MSS., and all the subscriptions to the Epistles, such as "Written to the Romans from Corinth, and sent by Phebe, servant of the church at Cenchrea," are of still later date, and are absolutely worthless, save as the text confirms them, which it seldom does. It may be there are those who think that even the division of the Bible into chapters and verses is a part of its original supernatural outfit. Certain it is that this division, especially into verses, has had no little influence on questions of interpretation. But the present system of verses only dates from 1551, Henry Stephens having done the whole business on a single journey between Paris and Lyons (it took longer then than it does now), and the present system of chapters goes back no further than the thirteenth century. The early MSS. of the New Testament are printed without any division of chapters, verses, or even words. They are one solid mass of letters, which have since been separated into words and verses and chapters.

But I am going back too fast. I have said that our authorized version is a very imperfect translation of the Hebrew and Greek text upon which it was based. It is still more imperfect as a reproduction of the Hebrew and Greek texts which since then have become available. This is so manifest that, a few years ago, the American Bible Society prepared a revised edition, correcting palpable inaccuracies, and altering the chapter-headings where they were grossly false or free. But after seven years of opposition, the revision was

withdrawn. One of the committee on revision was asked by James Freeman Clarke why this was done. The answer was, that it was owing to the fear that if we once begin to make corrections in the Bible, the people will lose faith in it altogether. So it has come to this, that the deliberate suppression of the truth is necessary to maintain the authority of the Bible. But George Macdonald very shrewdly says, "The hell which a lie will keep a man from is doubtless the best place that he can go to."

But supposing the authorized version were infallibly correct as a translation, was it a translation of the Hebrew and the Greek just as they came from the Almighty's supernatural dictation? It was a revision of the Bishops' Bible of the previous century, not an independent translation. It was seriously warped by this, by Luther's German version, and the Roman Vulgate. And what was the Hebrew and the Greek upon which all of the translations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were based? The Hebrew was the Hebrew of the Jewish Massorites (traditionists) of the eighth and ninth centuries after Christ. Before this time, the text had suffered every manner of vicissitude. Before the Christian era there was no received text, and the different copies of the Old Testament, or parts of it, varied from each other in multitudinous ways. When, in the second or third century, an attempt was made to fix the Hebrew text, it was done without any critical judgment. Arbitrary and fanciful considerations determined every doubtful point. Meantime the Christians were

indifferent to the original Hebrew, fancying the Jews had tampered with it, as indeed they had, but not as Christians thought; they (the Christians) preferred the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament made in the first and second centuries before Christ, itself a miserably imperfect reproduction of the original Hebrew. Through all the early Christian centuries, the Hebrew MSS. were written, as all Hebrew was originally written, without any vowels, and when the habit rose of writing in vowels, a wide field was opened for conjecture, and a splendid opportunity was offered for foisting private and ecclesiastical meanings upon Holy Writ.* By this circumstance alone, the meaning of the Old Testament has no doubt been made to vary, in hundreds of instances, from the original words of psalm and prophecy. Some of the early Protestants contended that the vowel points by which the Hebrew vowels are now indicated were infallibly inspired; but when it was discovered that these points were not invented for about a thousand years after the bulk of the Old Testament was written, this charming theory fell into disrepute. For some hundreds of years before the formation of the Massoretic text, the Old Testament MSS. had suffered not a little from the transcribers, but nothing to what they had suffered in the centuries immediately preceding and succeeding the beginning of the Christian era. During these centuries, apparently the largest liberties were taken with the

* Thus, the consonants *q, t, l*, may have nine different meanings, according as they have such or such vowels.

text. Carelessness and set purpose played an equal part in altering and enlarging and curtailing. Marginal readings were frequently embodied in the text. Such were a few of the vicissitudes to which the Hebrew mss. of the Old Testament were subjected before they reached that form in which they became the basis for the early Protestant translations. So that you must perceive that, even if our authorized version were an infallible translation of the best Hebrew the translators could get hold of, it would still be very far from representing the original sense of the Old Testament. Granting that there was an original, infallible Hebrew revelation, our Common Version would vary from it by an infinite remove, and to build any creed or base any argument whatsoever upon its isolated words and phrases would be the very acme of absurdity.

Such is the case with the Old Testament. And how is it with the New? Were the early Protestant translations, and among them our own Common Version, based upon a Greek text that dated back to the very moment of supernatural inspiration, so that there was no chance for human wit or carelessness to interpolate a single phrase or mar a single line? So it should be if God is really going to speak with us in the Greek language. But how is it in reality? The early Protestant translations, including our own, were based upon no manuscript earlier than the eleventh century after Christ. Between this time and that of the imagined revelation, the copyists had had their way with the original Greek to make and mar. But they had

not abused their opportunity. For the most part they were faithful, conscientious men, too reverent of the New Testament writings to tamper with them wilfully. But they were not always careful, and the most careful men will sometimes make mistakes. These did not make a few. Even the three earliest manuscripts—the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrian, dating from the fourth and fifth centuries, differ from each other widely, and in hundreds and thousands of places from the text which was the basis of our Common Version. But take all the manuscripts together which have been preserved to us, and they differ from each other in more than one hundred and twenty thousand separate places. Many of these differences are insignificant. But not a few of them are of the first importance. And even the slightest is a loop-hole through which the doctrine of infallibility escapes. How must it be with all of them together?

I have proceeded thus far on the assumption that, if we could go back far enough, we should come upon a twofold supernatural revelation in Hebrew and in Greek, and I have shown that if there was originally such a revelation it would be absolutely irrecoverable for us. Between it and us would lie a labyrinth of mistranslation and of mistranscription which no mortal man could ever hope to thread. And now it proves that the assumption which I have been making all the way along has not the least foundation. Let us go back in imagination to the time when the various books which make up the Old and New Testaments acquired substantially their present form, before

the first copyist began to copy them, or the first translator to translate them. So doing, do we come upon a fountain-head of supernatural inspiration? Indeed, my dear friends, we do not. We do not even come upon a common faith that such an inspiration had directed the composition of the various books. But what we do find is, that in every case the idea of special or of supernatural sacredness inhering in the various books of either Testament was a thing of slowest growth. We do not find that God spoke out of heaven and said, Such and such books are sacred and infallible; but we find that these books, from being at first regarded, for one reason or another, as very dear and precious, came, farther on, to be regarded as very specially sacred and finally the claim of supernatural inspiration was set up for them. Was there any thing in the character or training of the men from whom we have inherited this claim that justifies us in believing that they were fully qualified to judge between the natural and supernatural, so that we may not dare to go behind their dicta, and to test them by the books of which they had such an exalted notion? You know that there was not. Who they were is for the most part unknown to us. But in so far as we know them, we know that they were not all wise. They were not critical. They were extremely credulous, and fanciful, and superstitious. Their reasons for believing this and that were frequently no reasons. Irenæus thought there must be four canonical gospels and no more, because the wind blew from four quarters, and because

there were four projections to the cross. Their wish was generally the father of their thought. But is there not some proof that they had supernatural guidance in distinguishing between the false and true, that which should be canonical Scripture and that which should not be? It has never been pretended, except by men more superstitious and, in some instances, a good deal less honest than themselves. Does the Bible as a whole make any claim to supernatural inspiration? There is no *Bible as a whole*. Grant that the Bible is *the book of books*, it is as certainly *a book of books*; of books whose writers were not mutually responsible; of books that came into their present form along the course of ten or eleven centuries at the lowest computation. The whole collection has no common voice to name itself infallible or supernatural, and no single book sets up this claim for any other, or for all the rest, or for itself alone. Even where our Common Version reads, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," a more correct translation reads, "All Scripture that is given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," a proposition to which even Robert Ingersoll could heartily agree. Moreover, at the time when this sentence was written, the most of the New Testament was still unwritten, and even if this sentence had been written as our Common Version has it, of the

entire Bible, it would be no more than the opinion of some unknown writer (the second epistle to Timothy is very doubtfully Pauline), whose opinion upon such a matter, though he were the wisest of his age, would be worth a hundred times less than the opinion of any careful, conscientious scholar of the present century.

Now it so happens that while the formation of the Old Testament and New Testament canon is hidden in much mystery, there are some of its features which are very plain to any one who is really anxious to find out the simple truth concerning these important matters. For in the second Book of Maccabees we have a creditable statement that Nehemiah "founding a library brought together in addition (to the Pentateuch and Joshua) the things concerning the kings and the prophets and David's things and letters of kings about offerings (to the temple)." This was the second step in the formation of the Bible canon. The man who took it has painted his own picture for us in the book of Nehemiah, and it is the picture of a very harsh, and narrow, and self-righteous,* and hot-tempered man who could not keep his hands off those who had married foreign wives, but fell upon them and smote them, and plucked out their hair.† The first step in the formation of the canon had been taken a short time before the second by this same Nehemiah and his coadjutor Ezra, the priest and scribe. It consisted in the promulgation of the Pentateuch and Joshua as the Law of Israel in sub-

* Nehemiah 13 : 14.

† Ibid. 13 : 25.

stantially their present form. For a long time after the second collection made by Nehemiah, this was held in less esteem than the original instalment. Considered very precious, even this was not regarded as too sacred to be altered here and there, sometimes to a considerable extent, even so late as the first century before Christ; for it is certain that the account of the tabernacle in Exodus was a good deal expanded after the making of the Septuagint translation. The third and final step in the formation of the Old Testament canon was taken by Judas Maccabæus, who "brought together," it is said, "all the writings that were lost by reason of the war we had." The mass of writings thus added to the two collections made by Nehemiah must have corresponded very nearly to the third division of the Jewish Bible, which contains many of the Psalms, the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Solomon's Song, Job, while Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles bring up the rear. It is quite possible, it is even probable, that some of these were not in the collection made by Judas Maccabæus; for Daniel and Ecclesiastes had been written but a little while before. It would, however, be very wide the mark to make Nehemiah and Judas Maccabæus entirely responsible for the formation of the Jewish canon. The books they brought together were endorsed by general approbation; and even after they had been collected and the collection had come to be considered something more than precious, the right of several to be in it was earnestly disputed by the rabbis; the right of Eccle-

sistes on account of its skeptical and Epicurean tendencies; the right of Solomon's Song, for obvious reasons; and of Esther, because the name of God nowhere occurs in it; the right of Ezekiel, too, though he was in the second collection, because he was in conflict with the law. Thus it will appear that so far as we know any thing about the Old Testament canon, we know it was the outcome of men's purely natural and human interest in the literature of their nation and religion. In the earliest accounts of its formation, there is no claim of any thing superior to this. Jewish rabbis discussed the merits of the different books, and their opinions, not very calm or critical, united with the popular estimation to give the different books their place of honor. Sometimes it only took a little while for a book to arrive at canonicity, as in the case of Daniel; sometimes it took a long while, as in the case of Solomon's Song, only admitted to the third collection, though it is probably the oldest book in the Old Testament. And everywhere it is apparent that the idea of supernatural sacredness attaching to the canon was a thing of slowest growth. The different books were first esteemed precious, then sacred, then divine. For a long time the first instalment was considered more sacred than the second, and the second more sacred than the third, but at length all were esteemed equally sacred. A Jewish rabbi said: "The whole world was not worth the day on which the Song of Solomon was given to Israel." In all this process of canonization, which went on for four hundred years, there is no joint in the armor of a simple natural evolu-

tion which any supernaturalist can pierce. The entire process is obviously natural, human, fallible.

But for the destruction of the Jewish state in 70 A.D., it is very likely that the Jewish canon would have been still further enlarged. For new books had appeared in the two centuries previous, and had been received with great favor, especially by the Alexandrian Jews by whom they were translated into the Septuagint version. In the New Testament, which quotes almost entirely from the Septuagint, these books are not quoted directly as of equal authority with those of the Old Testament, as also is the book of Enoch, which is only in the Ethiopic canon, but their influence is often unmistakable. In the expressive phrase of Matthew Arnold, these books were knocking for admission to the Jewish canon in the first century of our era, and but for the destruction of Jerusalem, they would probably have been admitted. It is a pity some of them were not. Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom and the first Book of Maccabees are diamonds of the purest water. But what the Palestinian Jews rejected, the Christian church, following the Alexandrian Jews, accepted. These books were declared canonical by the Council of Carthage (397 A.D.), and again by the Council of Trent in 1545. Rejected by Protestants, though read by Lutherans and Anglicans "for instruction," they do not properly form a part of the Protestant Bible. But in this pulpit, you will bear me witness, that they have been read perhaps more frequently than any other equal portion of the Bible.

The destruction of Jerusalem made an end of

Bible-making for the Jew ; but at the date of that event, the most important section of the Christian Bible was still to make, namely, the New Testament. The epistles of Paul were written, and also the Apocalypse, but they were not yet recognized as Scripture. The New Testament was not, as a whole, signed, sealed, and delivered by the Almighty as a supernatural revelation. The history of the New Testament canon does but repeat the history of the Old. For centuries after they were written, the New Testament books were regarded as belonging to a different order from the Old Testament. A Jew would have been shocked hardly more than a Christian at the idea of putting them on a level with the law and the prophets. Oral tradition was esteemed of greater value than the written gospels and epistles. The books which make up our New Testament do not exhaust the sum of early Christian literature. There were gospels besides ours; other epistles; of Acts of the Apostles, thirty-six are mentioned by Fabricius, and of Apocalypses twelve. Was there then any supernatural indication which of these books were supernaturally inspired and which were not; which ought to be canonical, and which ought not to be? You know that there was not. It was left for human wit and ignorance and prejudice and passion to decide. And never did men live more superstitious and less critical than the majority of those, even the learned, who made the ultimate decision. The same voices in the early centuries which declared for the genuineness of our Gospels and Epistles de-

clared for the genuineness of others which are lost to us forever, or which are set aside with scorn. The Sinaitic MS., the oldest and most precious that we have, contains an Epistle of Barnabas, which was afterward excluded. The Apocalypse, the best accredited book in the New Testament, barely escaped the same fate because its doctrine was distasteful. The councils which discussed the authenticity and value of the different books were often little better than ecclesiastical mobs. The Council of Carthage (397 A.D.) declared all our present books to be canonical and no more. But the same council declared the canonicity of the Old Testament Apocrypha, which every evangelical Protestant rejects. But the council did not express the sense of Christendom, and its vote was not regarded. Jerome, the greatest scholar of his time, and soundly orthodox, writing almost simultaneously with the Council of Carthage, tells us that the custom of the Latin Church rejected Hebrews; that of the Greek Church, the Apocalypse; that Second Peter was "denied by most to be his," that James also was discredited, Jude "rejected by most," and two of John's epistles were esteemed as lightly. No wonder then that after the Council of Carthage as before, what had been "made unanimous" by vote was not so. Books rejected by the council were read in the churches one and two centuries later. In simple truth, the canon was not fixed by the Roman Church until the Council of Trent in 1545, nor by the Protestant divines till the same period. So that here as with the Old Testament canon, we have a purely

natural history. A supernatural element nowhere appears. A supernatural hand is nowhere put forth to rescue or strike down a gospel or epistle. The formation of the canon was the work of "unassisted human reason." Sometimes of unreason, prejudice, and superstition. We are told that the history of the canon was another example of "natural selection," and "the survival of the fittest." But it is by no means certain that the fittest always did survive. That it did, for the most part, I can easily believe.

And all that I have said so far is simply undeniable. It is no matter of radical theory, it is a matter of universal knowledge among those who have made a study of these things. The age and authorship of various books may be disputed, but the history of the canon in its leading features is such as I have told, and is allowed to be such by the most conservative. And such being the case, it surely is not becoming for any man to judge his brother man severely for declining to accept as supernatural authority a book made up of fragments so diverse, collected so much at random, and which grew into canonical repute and sacredness only after many centuries of doubtful authenticity and strange adventure. If there is irreverence here, is it not rather theirs who hold a book with such a history to be infallible or supernatural, rather than theirs who dare not make the Infinite God responsible for the result of so much human pride and folly, or even of so much holy faith, and righteous zeal, and glowing aspiration?

But we have not yet followed up our Ganges to

its fountain-head. Behind the question of canonicity is the question of the authorship and character of the various books and fragments which make up the Old Testament and New. Certainly there is nothing in the canonical history of these books and fragments to preclude us from studying these books just as we would study any others. We must go to them without any prepossessions. If we find mistakes in them, or contradictions, or absurdities, or imperfect views of God, or immoral teachings, we must not feel obliged to explain these things away any more than if we were studying the Vedas or the Koran or the Homeric poems or the writings of Plato or Epictetus. Approaching the Bible in this spirit, and taking up its various books in order, do we find anywhere the traces of a supernatural origin or inspiration? Not, I am sure, unless we are resolved, consciously or unconsciously, that we will find such an origin or inspiration. In the first place, the authorship of a great majority of the sixty-seven books contained in the Bible is unknown to us and cannot be discovered. Of thirty-nine books in the Old Testament, we know with tolerable certainty the authorship of seventeen, or of some part of them. These are eleven of the minor prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations and Ezekiel, Ezra and Nehemiah. Of the thirteen books before Ezra, we do not know the authorship of one, nor any more of Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Solomon's Song, Daniel, Jonah. In the New Testament, the authorship of the Apocalypse is tolerably sure, and

six or eight of Paul's Epistles ; but beyond these every thing is extremely doubtful. But even if we knew the authorship of every book from Genesis to Revelation, we should still be thrown back on the contents of these books in order to decide upon their character. Though each separate author claimed a supernatural inspiration, his claim would still have to be tested by the work of his hands. But so far as the writers of the Bible are known to us, this claim is nowhere made in either Testament. The prophets did undoubtedly imagine themselves as possessing a peculiar inspiration, but not as writers of the books which have come down to us ; only as possessors of "the Word of Jehovah" as a means for the rebuke and the encouragement of Israel.

Do, then, the contents of the various books attest their supernatural origin and demand our reverence of them as a supernatural authority ? To answer such a question briefly is no easy matter. Only a hint is possible, but to be brief here is to be inconclusive. The historical books of the Old Testament, including in this designation the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings and Chronicles, are fragmentary compositions, the growth of many centuries. The Pentateuch alone is made up of four considerable documents running in and out and round about each other in the queerest way. The earliest of these documents could not have been written earlier than the eighth century, B.C., though it embodied fragments of an earlier period. The books of Samuel and Kings are mainly written from the prophetic

stand-point, but from the prophetic stand-point of different periods, a wheel within a wheel. In Chronicles, the history is again rewritten from the priestly stand-point, and is quite another history. Shall we say that it is false, and that the other histories are true? No, but that this is less true than the others. The prophetic histories are far enough from true. They represent all things not as they were, but as they should have been, according to the prophetic theory of life. Turning from the histories to other books, we find in them the same fragmentary character. Job, the work of some indomitable protestant of the sixth century B.C., at total variance with the prophets, has been interpolated again and again to the extent of many chapters. The Psalms, of which seventy-three are ascribed to David, are his undoubtedly in only a small fraction of this number. The Psalter was a growth of many centuries; not less than nine, if David wrote the two psalms which a great orthodox scholar thinks are his beyond a doubt. The book of Proverbs is made up of several fragments, the earliest dating two or three hundred years after Solomon. Ecclesiastes is a composition of the third century B.C. The prophets reproduce these literary ethics. Daniel and Jonah are ascribed to prophets who lived centuries before these books were written. The last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah were written two centuries later than the first thirty-nine, in which also there are various interpolations. Zechariah is made up of three fragments of as many centuries. Jeremiah is the victim of some spuri-

ous additions. The prophecies of the different prophets were written down long after they were spoken. Scores of their predictions were not fulfilled. The few that were afford no evidence of a supernatural prevision. A natural explanation is always possible. But this does not detract from their peculiar glory, which was to preach the moral nature of Jehovah, and to claim for him a moral service, "the sacrifices of righteousness."

The contents of the separate books of the New Testament demand a supernatural inspiration to account for them no more than the contents of Hebrew Law and Prophecy. The Gospels all abound in changes and interpolations. Fragments of earlier writings are incorporated in them. They quote from Jeremiah a verse of Zechariah. They quote the mistranslations of the Septuagint, and pursue the allegorical methods of the Jewish scribes. Matthew, the earliest, was probably not written till the beginning, John not till the middle of the second century. The Gospels, it is likely, are all based on earlier writings; but for some forty or fifty years after the death of Jesus, there was probably no written memorial of his incomparable career.

The Acts of the Apostles is a second century attempt to harmonize the conflicting Petrine and Pauline elements in the early Church. If this book is history, Paul's testimony in his own epistles must be set aside as both untruthful and malicious. But I prefer to think that Paul is our best witness of his posture in the early Church, and that of the Jerusalem Apostles. The unques-

tionable epistles of Paul are the hard-pan of Christian history. But they throw no particle of light upon the personal history of Jesus. They put us in communication with a man of splendid attributes of mind and heart, but they contain no claim or hint of supernatural inspiration. From first to last, the ideas of the Apostle vary to a considerable extent. His Christology is wildly fanciful, his exegesis is the exegesis of his times. Upon the idiomatic use of a singular for a plural in the Old Testament (just as we say *fish* for *fishes*) he bases a stupendous argument. He cherishes the common expectation of his time that Christ is coming back to earth again. We shall not expect to find the other epistles more supernatural than Paul's, and we do not. As Michel Angelo left a bit of unhewn marble upon his David's head, for love of the Carrara quarries out of which his block had come, so in these New Testament epistles, every one, there is some unhewn bit of pure humanity, error or fancy or what not, which unmistakably reveals their purely natural and human origin. And so with the Apocalypse. It anticipates the immediate return of Jesus, the resurrection of the saints, their reign upon the earth a thousand years, and then the general resurrection. But these anticipations have not been verified. Well-nigh a second thousand years have past, but neither earth nor sea has given up its dead.

There is then nothing in the essential character of the Bible writings to reverse the intimations of their canonical history, and of their

various vicissitude of transmission from the time when they were written to our own. That God should leave a supernatural book to such vicissitudes, that he should leave its canonicity to be decided by the means that did decide it, was inconceivable; but having engaged to follow the sacred stream up to its fountain-head, we have done so, and, Ganges-like, we find it does not rise in heaven, but on the mountain-sides of human love and righteousness and pain. Even if in its first condition the Bible had been supernatural, it would not be so for us, so many tributary streams have flowed into it from Judea and Egypt and Italy and England, bringing with them abundant error. But the initial stage of this age-long development betrays no sign of supernatural intervention any more than the succeeding stages. The whole development is of a piece, and it is simply natural and human. In the criticism of the Bible and in the history of its vicissitudes, there is not a place as big as a pin-head for the supernaturalist to stand upon.

And now I ask you squarely, Who are the irreverent? Those who assert the supernatural character and authority of the Bible, or those who dare not charge the infinite God with the responsibility of such a various and incongruous heap of Jewish literature? For it is Jewish all, even the New Testament, and none the worse for this. What are the sacred Scriptures? They are a collection of writings for the most part anonymous, written at various times from the ninth century before until the second after Christ, containing

the most various religious teachings, the most various moral precepts; a collection of writings which very gradually came to be esteemed, and finally to be regarded as sacred and infallible, upon what grounds and by what persons being little known; a collection of writings which, before and since their arrival at canonical distinction, have been subjected to every imaginable vicissitude of transmission and translation, so that in the New Testament alone more than one hundred and twenty thousand various readings have been noted in the MSS. And yet knowing all this, or, if they do not, disgracing the positions which they hold, it is an every-day affair for Christian ministers to hold up to public scorn those who declare they cannot call the Bible supernatural, nor find a supernatural element anywhere implicated in it, nor allow it a particle of authority over and above the intrinsic rationality of its succeeding parts. Who are the irreverent? Who, if not those who dare ascribe this Book of books, for all the treasures it contains, to a Divine artificer? Compared with these—I say it solemnly—the coarsest flings of Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll are reverent towards God, however they may fail of reverence for the Bible. But what a shame it is that this most precious book should have to suffer contumely and abuse because of the mistaken estimate which men have put upon it. Take it for what it is, and there is no shaft of scorn that can be winged at it that shall not fly back into the archer's face, and those that spit at it shall spit against the wind. Let

Christendom accept a rational theory of the Bible such as is taught to-day by many Christian scholars even in good orthodox standing, and Robert Ingersoll will find his occupation gone ; nay, he will himself be found among the prophets of the new and higher dispensation.

For though the Bible makes no claim of supernatural origin or authority, and though no claim of this sort made for it can stand the tests of critical investigation, it has a natural sacredness, a human glory and significance, that demand for it a large and tender reverence, and will no less but more when all its supernatural belongings have been forever stripped away. It is the grandest contribution which the illimitable past has furnished us of the rise and growth of a religion from the lowest depth of fetichism and idolatry up to the filial piety of Jesus and the inclusive sympathy of Paul. We behold the idea of God slowly purifying itself, till from a nature-deity or a tribal god, who craves the blood of human sacrifice, it grows into "a Spirit ; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." In the Old Testament prophets we have a series of heroic forms, supremely loyal to their sense of truth and good, and in their lyric utterance furnishing the reformers of two thousand years and more with ready-made denunciations of oppression and misrule, and the oppressed also with an untrammelled litany of hope and consolation. And who shall tell all that the Psalms have been, for all their maledictions, to the toiling, sorrowing, struggling and rejoicing sons of men ? If the New Testament did

nothing more than reveal to us the figure of Jesus, seen dimly through the mists and vapors of a century of political disorder and religious change, but seen here and here only,—if the New Testament did no more than shrine for us this Galilean youth, so tender in his pity, so awful in his indignation, it would make us all its everlasting debtors. But it does more than this. The figure of Paul is hardly less unique than that of Jesus. What a man was there! What a great heart of love! Hated by all the rest of the apostles, who would fain have put the new wine of Christianity into the old musty wine-sacks of the priests and scribes, he went out alone with his great hope—not taking counsel with any—to make Christianity a universal faith. Thank God that we have so many of this man's own words; that we know of him by no mere hearsay, but meet him face to face in his own rugged, tortuous speech! But what the Bible is upon the positive side cannot be briefly told. It is not science; it is not history; it is not biography; it is not even suitable for the moral guidance of the nineteenth century man. Joseph Cook says it can be literally translated into life, and this is the sufficient pledge of its divine authority. But can it be so translated? Can the imprecations of the Psalms, the precepts of the Law? Can this sentence, "Give wine to him that has a heavy heart. Let him drink and forget his sorrows, and remember his misery no more"? Can even the precepts of the forever-lauded Sermon on the Mount? This, for example, "Take no thought for the morrow." Translate this into life, and what would be-

come of our great social order, the slowly-ripened fruit of many centuries of human providence? No; it is not for its moral precepts, lofty as many of them are, that we must prize the Bible. It is for its *moral and religious inspiration*. For this is not dependent on the special moral precepts which are inculcated, or on the special theories of religion. The idea of God in the Bible varies widely from first to last, but it is the central idea; "God and his righteousness," the righteousness which is his holiest service. Everywhere there is the glow of worship, and everywhere there is the high demand for purity and justice between man and man. And these are a perpetual inspiration.

The sacred Scriptures: What are they? The Bible being what it is, they cannot all be gathered into the narrow space between its covers. There have been and are other religions besides Christianity and Judaism, and they have had their sacred scriptures, and they have been regarded as supernatural and infallible. Every claim that we have made for our bible they have made for theirs, and in their case, as in ours, the claim is utterly fallacious. But in these other bibles also there are sacred scriptures; sentences of imperial dignity and heavenly beauty. They abound in the Vedas of the Brahmans and the Tripitka of the Buddhists, in the Koran and the Zend Avesta, in "the four King and the five Shoo" of China. There are sentences in these Bibles which, for spiritual beauty or moral insight, are not surpassed in any book between the lids of our own Bible. At the same time, so far as I can judge, no other bible in its

completeness can compare with the Hebrew and Christian Bible which we call our own. The Mohammedan would not allow it; the Buddhist would not allow it; but from the stand-point of untrammelled reason, not merely from the stand-point of sectarian Christianity, it does not admit of any doubt; the chaff is so much less, the wheat is so much more; there is in our Bible so much more poetry, so much more humanity, so much more naturalness and simple health. Allow for long associations, allow for the "well of English undefiled," as our translation has been fitly called, and still the Old and New Testaments are of all bibles preëminently *the* Bible. There is more intellect in the Brahmanic bible, but there is not so much heart. There is more unity in the Koran, but there is not so much diversity. Our Bible is *the* Bible of comparative religion.

But the sacred scriptures of humanity are not contained in all the bibles of the various religions. Many have had a dream of a new bible made up of the best parts of the different bibles of the different religions. It is an idle dream. Mr. Conway's "Sacred Anthology," from which I often read to you, is something of this sort, and though I like it well, it is no substitute for the great Bible of the Christian Church. And as an epitome of the sacred scriptures of humanity it is dreadfully imperfect. And any Anthology would be, which should contain only the best of all the accepted bibles of the different religions. There are as good fish in the sea as have ever been caught in any bible-net; as good words in Epic-

tetus and Aurelius, and Socrates and Plato, though they were never set up as supernatural, as in any bible, Aryan, or Semitic, or Turanian. And what is more, the best that has been written is of more modern date than any of the bibles, than any of the Greek or Roman sages. The sacred scriptures—they are scattered up and down the mighty course of literature from the most ancient *veda* to the most modern hymn or story. *That is the most inspired which is the most inspiring.* Now it is a sentence of Augustine or Fenélon, now a line of Shakspere or Milton, now a song of Longfellow or Tennyson, and anon a brave and ringing word, such as I read to you the other morning from John Stuart Mill. I am free to say that the most inspiring word that I have ever read, and therefore for me the most inspired, is the last chapter of a certain novel,* which laid a firmer grasp upon my moral nature than any word of man that I had ever read. It was a woman's word. How foolish, then, the thought that we can ever have the sacred scriptures of humanity confined within the compass of a single book. It is impossible. And it is not desirable. Better to pluck each flower of thought or sentiment in its own garden. Even my favorite poems lose a little of their charm, when they have been transplanted into a "Household Book of Poetry," though such a book is amply justified. But as I would not have the true Church universal any thing but invisible, as I would not have all holy men and women

* George Eliot's "Romola."

parcelled off into one company, so I would not have the sacred scriptures of humanity gathered into one collection. Where they are, there let them still abide; in Old Testament and New, in Veda and Koran and Avesta, in Epictetus and Aurelius, in Homer and Shakspere, in Whittier and Lowell, in Robertson and Channing, in Fichte and Spencer, in Tyndall and Huxley, in Thackeray and Dickens, in Parker and Emerson, and the rest of the innumerable company. Are they not all ministering spirits; all messengers of peace and strength and consolation? Well is it written in the New Testament, "The word of God is not bound." It is not bound to any people or to any time. The heavens are still open; the voice of the Eternal still goes sounding on. Happy are they who hear! Thrice happy they who listen and obey!

"Thou gracious voice, go sounding on
Till all the inheritance be won."

THE MORALS OF BELIEF.

THERE is hardly any subject on which good men differ more widely than this which I have chosen as the subject of my discourse this morning, The Morals of Belief. On the one hand, we hear continually about the sin of unbelief ; we hear it asserted that this is the greatest of all sins ; that even doubt is criminal. On the other hand, we hear it said that a man is not responsible for his belief ; that he cannot believe what he wishes to believe or wills to believe, and therefore that belief can be no virtue and unbelief no sin. "See," say these last, "there are good men in all the churches. There are good Romanists as well as Protestants ; good Universalists as well as Calvinists ; good Christians as well as good Buddhists and Mohammedans. Therefore it makes no difference what a man believes." Now which of these positions shall we accept, or what modification of either, or compromise between the two, should neither, taken by itself, prove to be entirely satisfactory ?

And that neither will prove so to the majority of you whom I address I am quite confident, if you will attend for a few moments to a few obvious considerations. First, as to the sin of unbelief, and whether it is the greatest sin of which a

man is capable. The second proposition need not be considered if we conclude that there is no such sin. And this is what we must conclude, if we consider well what we are speaking of. For sin is a matter of the will, but belief is a matter of the intellect. It is therefore, strictly speaking, as absurd to speak of the sin of unbelief as it would be to speak of a yellow noise, or of *hearing* a smile, as Mrs. Browning does, or of doing any thing with one sense which can only be done with another. But as the impressions upon one sense may be correlated with impressions on another sense, as the sound of thunder with the sight of lightning, so may the impressions of the intellect be correlated with the action of the will; and so while there cannot, strictly speaking, be any such thing as the sin of unbelief, there may be unbelief,—and belief too, for that matter,—which is the result and sign of an immoral will submitting to its baser inclinations. But if belief as well as unbelief can be the result and sign of an immoral will, evidently we have disposed forever of all this talk about “the sin of unbelief,” as if unbelief in itself were necessarily sinful or even the sign of an anterior sinfulness. Side by side there may be belief and unbelief, and the belief may be the result and sign of greater sin than the unbelief. For example, some man in the community is accused of having committed a heinous crime. John believes him guilty; James does not. But why does John believe him guilty? Because, perhaps, being a bad man himself, it is easy for him to believe badness of others. And why does James

believe him innocent? Because, being a good man himself, it is easy for him to believe in goodness. In both cases I say perhaps. It may be that John has sufficient reasons for his belief, James not for his unbelief. But the illustration is sufficient proof that unbelief may be the result and sign of sinfulness; belief, the sign of moral purity and nobleness.

But it is also proof of something else which bears equally hard upon men's notion of the sin of unbelief, viz., that belief and unbelief are always convertible terms. Thus, in the case we have imagined—a man accused of having committed some heinous crime—John believes him guilty; James does not. Putting it in this way, John is the believer, James the unbeliever. But put it James believes him innocent, John does not: James is the believer, John the unbeliever. And put it either way, it is really James who believes *in the man* and only doubts the proposition of his guilt. Therefore the formal unbelief may prove a real belief in something greater: belief in the man being much greater than belief in the mere proposition of his guilt. May it not be so frequently in theological discussions? That it is so in regard to belief and unbelief being convertible terms there cannot be a moment's doubt. Relatively to Calvin, Servetus was an unbeliever. Relatively to Servetus, Calvin was an unbeliever. The orthodox are as heterodox to me as I am to them. Precisely. I do not believe what they do; they do not believe what I do. So far it is an even thing. But now comes in the second part of our

above consideration. We found that James was the real believer even when doubting the proposition in dispute. He believed in the greater fact, viz., the man. So in our theological controversies (as I once tried to show in a discourse upon the question, Who are the Infidels?). Those are called unbelievers who do not believe in the depravity of human nature, in the incarnation and atonement of Jesus Christ, in the supernatural inspiration of the Bible. But here in every case the unbeliever believes more than the believer. He believes in the intellectual and moral sanity of human nature, in the universal incarnation of the Infinite, in the universal atonement of suffering, in the natural inspiration of the human mind proving itself in many books and many ages of the world, proving itself gloriously in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. At every point, what he believes in is the broader, nobler, sweeter, more inspiring doctrine. His relative infidelity is but the mask of faith; while the relative belief of his opponent is but the mask of an essential and not merely formal infidelity. The popular religionist does not so much believe in God or man as he believes certain current and traditional statements about them. The rationalist does not believe any of these statements, but he believes in God and man. Who are the Infidels?

But while the largeness and the beauty and the strength and sweetness of the thing believed in may be, and ought to be, the test of men's essential faith or infidelity, they cannot be the test of sin or virtue, of the character of those who hold

respectively the larger or the smaller thought, the sweeter or less sweet, the more or less beautiful, the stronger or the weaker. And even if it were not so, it would be no easy matter to decide who are the sinners. For the question, Which are the larger and which the smaller thoughts, which the more and which the less beautiful? would underlie the decision, and this question would be answered differently by different men. But that the largeness or the smallness of belief is no measure of the amount of virtue which has gone to its formation, or makes up the general character of the individual, is better shown by reference to special instances than by abstract discussion. Within the last half-century England has furnished to the world the spectacle of two pairs of brothers, men of exalted genius all of them, but each pair differing, brother from brother, to almost the greatest possible extent. I refer to the brothers Anthony and Hurrell Froude and Francis William and John Henry Newman. Born and bred under the same conditions, these brothers separated more and more until they found the width of Christendom between them. Anthony Froude you know as a historian, but before he set himself to writing history he had set England by the ears in a book called "The Nemesis of Faith," which was the book of a thorough-going rationalist. His brother Hurrell was one of the most brilliant leaders of the Tractarian or High Church or Puseyite movement in England, saved only by his early death, in 1836, from going over to Rome years before Newman went (in 1845), though but for Froude's death

Newman would probably have gone much earlier. The brothers Newman are both living still, though old and worn with many a hard-fought battle. Every man who talks about the sin of unbelief, or imagines that the quality of a man's belief is a sufficient index to the quality of his moral character, ought to read the two most characteristic books which these two men have written. John Henry's, the elder, is called *Apologia pro vita sua*, an apology for his life; and Francis William's is called "Phases of Faith." The former tells the story of the gradual changes which led him, through dissatisfaction with the Church of England, after heroic efforts to reform it and despair of doing so, to rest his weary head at length upon the ample bosom of the mother-church. It is an intensely interesting story, written in such a style as no other living Englishman is master of. The book is full of strength and full of tenderness. Its closing passage is one of the most touching in all literature, as far as I can judge. You get the spirit of the man in that beautiful hymn of his which many of you know, for nothing else which he has written has been so frequently reprinted.

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
 Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
 Lead thou me on;
Keep thou my feet, and I do not ask to see
 The distant scene: one step enough for me.

This hymn was written on the Bay of Genoa, on his way back to England to begin the fight for a reformed Anglicanism, with a watchword from

Homer, which he and Keble had chosen, "You shall know the difference now that I am back again." The "distant scene" of the poem, which he did not ask to see, was the Roman Church. He did not see it till he was close upon it. "One step enough for me," he sang. And he sang truly. He made no leap. His progress Romeward was a strictly logical procedure. He has written a work upon logic, "The Grammar of Assent," and there is probably not a more logical man alive than he. Allow his premisses and his conclusion can be avoided. We must follow him to Rome.

His younger brother is a man of less imagination and less splendor of style, but on the whole possesses a mind of equal vigor, as logically exact, enriched with a more various culture. Starting side by side with his brother, they soon began to diverge; long before they found themselves going in opposite directions, no longer keeping the same path. The first tendencies of the younger were to an intenser Calvinism and a more biblical authority. The chapter-headings of his book are a good indication of the different stages of his belief. They read as follows: Strivings after a more Primitive Christianity; Calvinism Abandoned; The Religion of the Letter Renounced; Faith at Second Hand found to be Vain; History discovered to be no Part of Religion. These were the stages of his advance, or retrogression if you please, from orthodox supernaturalism to a faith wholly rational and spiritual, proving itself by neither miracle nor prophecy nor church decree, but resting solely on its intrinsic

rationality, its harmony with human reason, conscience, and affection.

Between this position and that of the elder brother, as a member of the Roman Catholic order of the Oratory, what an almost incalculable difference! And what an instructive difference it is! What light it throws upon the folly of this talk about the sin of unbelief! In which of these two men does it inhere? From the ordinary evangelical Protestant's point of view, the result in either case is about equally distressing. Between Romanism and rationalism he would find it difficult to choose. If the Romanist believes too much for him, the rationalist believes too little. And there is unbelief implied in the Romanist's belief in an infallible church, unbelief in the Bible as a self-interpreting and all-sufficient revelation of the will of God. This the Protestant sees, without seeing that his own beliefs often imply an unbelief in things which rationalists consider of much more importance than his doctrinal statements. So then the evangelical Protestant cannot measure the belief of these men by their difference from each other. Can he by their difference from his evangelical standard? If "difference from me is [not only] measure of absurdity," but equally measure of guilt, they are perhaps equally guilty. But let him read their separate stories, and he must be blind indeed if in his heart of hearts for equally guilty he does not write equally innocent, equally brave and honest, earnest and sincere. Of either brother he will say, as Pilate said of Jesus, "I find no fault in the man."

To the rationalist the problem is presented under a different aspect. He finds himself in substantial agreement with the younger brother. A vast majority of Christian men would agree to call him an unbeliever, and John Henry a believer ; but to the rationalist these terms seem easily and naturally reversible. Francis appears the believer, as believing at every point the larger, broader, more inspiring thing ; John appears the unbeliever, as believing the smaller, narrower, less inspiring thing. But to the rationalist this difference in no wise implies a corresponding moral difference in the two men, a difference of saint and sinner. In the best sense both of these men are saints, and hero-saints at that ; both pure and brave as any men alive ; both equally enamored of the truth ; both equally incapable of any falseness, baseness, or meanness. What an impressive and what an instructive spectacle it is ! Two men of mighty intellect, of splendid culture, of unimpeachable integrity, differing by all the breadth of Christendom ! It is enough to hush forever the presumption that a man's character is to be measured by his creed. Measure the characters of Francis and John Henry Newman by their creeds, and they would seem as opposite as the antipodes ; but measure them by all that they have said and done, by all that they have written and the spirit and intention therein displayed, by all the testimonies of contemporary men, and to decide which is the better man would be a quite impossible achievement. I never read Arthur Hugh Clough's poem on "Friends parted by Opinion" without think-

ing of these two, whose varying fortunes it describes so perfectly. Surely its final wish is one that every generous heart must feel, and feeling trust it will indeed be so.

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day,
Are scarce, long leagues apart, descried ;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
By each was cleaving, side by side :

E'en so—but why the tale reveal
Of those whom, year by year unchanged,
Brief absence joined anew to feel,
Astounded, soul from soul estranged ?

At dead of night their sails were filled,
And onward each rejoicing steered :
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,
Or wist, what first at dawn appeared !

To veer, how vain ! On, onward strain,
Brave barks ! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides ;
To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze, and O great seas,
Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
Together lead them home at last !

One port, methought, alike they sought,
One purpose hold where'er they fare ;
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas,
At last, at last, unite them there !

But while the rationalist is happy that he can believe in both of these great men, hold them both blameless, admire in both an equal and magnificent

integrity, he can but feel a weight of sorrow pressing on his heart that there should be such a fearful difference between men of equal intellectual force and moral earnestness. The rationalist believes in reason; but what is the use of reason if it is going to bring men into such antipodal positions? But let him not be in a hurry to discredit the fair guide whom he has chosen. There is more in this matter than at first appears. It is not accidental, this difference of the brothers Newman. There is a reason for it, if we had the wit to find it, which once found would be of no little service to us in the pursuit of truth. "Hypocrites," says Lecky, "or men who, through interested motives, profess opinions which they do not really believe, are probably rarer than is usually supposed; but it would be difficult to overestimate the number of those whose genuine convictions are due to the unresisted bias of their interests. By the term interests I mean not only material well-being, but also all those mental luxuries, all those grooves or channels for thought which it is easy or pleasant to follow and painful and difficult to abandon. Such are the love of ease, the love of certainty, the love of system, the bias of the passions, the associations of the imagination, as well as the coarser influences of social position, domestic happiness, professional interest, party feeling, or ambition. In most men the love of truth is so languid, and their reluctance to encounter mental suffering so great, that they yield their judgments without an effort to the current, withdraw their minds from all opinions and argu-

ments opposed to their own, and thus speedily convince themselves of the truth of that which they wish to believe." Now, from any of the coarser influences which Lecky specifies against which the seeker should be constantly upon his guard, it were superfluous to say that our brothers John and Francis have been equally free. You cannot conceive of either as being in the least affected by considerations of social position, or professional interest, or party feeling, or ambition. Surely the love of ease was never a benumbing or misleading force in their experience. The paths they chose subjected them to years of mental turbulence, to social ostracism, to the loss of great positions, to the loss of many friends, even, I fear, to mutual alienation. But among the interests that Mr. Lecky names are two, and these the most subtle, which any reader of John Henry Newman's *Apologia* must see were powerfully effective in determining the line of his advance; these were the love of certainty and the love of system. His love of certainty was not of the vulgar sort. Suspense of judgment, the inflexible condition of all vigorous or victorious thinking, was quite as possible for him as for his brother. For six years at least he sat upon the fence which divides the Anglican and Roman churches, a very narrow and uncomfortable seat, pelted by epithets from either side, ere he concluded to get down upon the side of Rome. His love of certainty was not inability to suspend his judgment—did not involve this. It was a part of his conviction that there must be somewhere on earth a systematic body of dogmat-

ic truth, an organization having it in charge. We may be sure that if it had ever occurred to him that this love and this conviction were biassing his search for truth, he would have been upon his guard against them. But there is not a sign in his mental history that any such thought ever did occur to him. Here was a premiss he never thought of questioning: that absolute dogmatic certainty was necessary; and, if necessary, then possible. Somewhere on earth must be its representative. To conclude that this representative was Rome was only a matter of time. The moral of his fortunes is, Beware what you assume. Thousands assume with him that it is necessary to have a body of infallible truth on earth represented by an ecclesiastical organization. If the assumption was a sin in him, it is a sin in all who hold it. If they do not follow him to Rome, it is only because they are less logical than he. The only logical escape from his conclusions is to abandon the idea that there must be and is a body of infallible truth anywhere upon earth, entrusted to a visible representative, be it church or book; is to confess that an approximation to the truth, getting ever closer and closer, but never reaching up to its entire perfection, is all that we can ever hope to attain, and, moreover, that there is enough in this to satisfy our every real need.

But so far I have done little more than show the utter absurdity of talking about the sin of unbelief. As I have said, sin being of the will, belief of the intellect, it is as absurd to talk about the sin of unbelief as to talk about a yellow noise.

No more can unbelief be reckoned as the *result* and *sign* of sinfulness, even though we mean by unbelief essential unbelief, unbelief in the larger, broader, sweeter, more inspiring things. Between the conscious virtue and nobility of the brothers Newman I have found myself unable to choose, though in his creed I am with Francis, heart and soul, and to the other's equally opposed. But do these conclusions imply the truth of those which, at the start, I set over against their opposites, namely, that a man is not responsible for his belief at all, and that it makes no difference what a man believes? Be it far from me to give any countenance whatever to these miserable fallacies, popular as they are getting to be. There is a moral element implied in all our thinking. The belief in itself is neither moral nor immoral, at least so long as it does not deal with purely moral relations, but the conduct of the intellect is a strictly moral affair. Because two men, like John and Francis Newman, of splendid parts and culture, and of invincible integrity, arrive at the antipodes in matters of theology, it does not follow that all men would think just as they themselves do in theological and other matters, if they had all been as morally faithful as those men of culture and renown. It does not even follow that their belief had no moral determination. Somewhat less moral, and John Henry Newman would still be an Anglican, and very likely an archbishop; somewhat less moral, Francis William Newman would be in much the same position. And as for the generality of men, there

is hardly one whose belief would not be different, perhaps more radical and perhaps more conservative, if he were a better man. Indeed, I do not know but that it would be much better for men to go on talking about the sin of unbelief than for them to think that there is no responsibility in matters of belief at all. For that talk hints at a truth, though it is erroneous in its form; the truth that there are ethics of the intellect, that is, ethics of the conduct of the intellect, that the search after truth is a moral search, conditioned quite as much by moral as by intellectual data. The trouble with it is that it makes certain theological beliefs virtuous in themselves and others sinful, or makes certain theological beliefs the infallible signs of virtue or of sin. For doing this there is no warrant; not the slightest. There *are* morals of belief; the conduct of the intellect, the pursuit of truth, is a moral concern, but, accepting for the moment the popular standards of belief and unbelief, there is quite as much sin of belief as of unbelief in the community. Indeed, I think there is a great deal more, the so-called believers are so much more numerous than the unbelievers. But really there is no sin either of belief or unbelief. There *is* sin in the conduct of the intellect, the professed search for truth, and this sin has its representatives in all the sects—not less in the evangelical than in the most radical.

The morals of belief consist in the endeavor to resist all of those influences which are manifestly opposed to an unbiassed search for truth. “Such,”

to revert to Mr. Lecky, "are the love of ease, the love of certainty, the love of system, the bias of the passions, the associations of the imagination, as well as the coarser influences of social position, domestic happiness, professional interest, party feeling, or ambition." A man not responsible for his opinions! No, he is not directly; but he is responsible for his mental attitude, on which, far more than on the arguments addressed to him or on his natural intellectual gifts, depend the most of his conclusions.

The substitution of such a test as this for that of the presence or absence of certain theological beliefs would reverse in many instances the judgments of the popular religion. Beliefs now held to be the sign of virtue and salvation would prove to be the sign of cowardice and sloth; of loving ease too much and certainty too much; of weighing social position and professional interest against truth and argument. And on the other hand, beliefs now held to be sinful or the sign of sin would prove to be the signs of courage and self-sacrifice; of willingness to follow the light of evidence to any conclusions even the most unwelcome; of steady purpose to emancipate the mind from inherited prejudices and preconceptions; of a disposition "to proportion on all occasions conviction to evidences, and to be ready, if need be, to exchange the calm of assurance for the suffering of a perplexed and disturbed mind." In a recent writing upon this subject I find a parable which admirably sets forth the mental attitude of the great majority of

men in every community, and especially of those who have the most to say about the sin of unbelief and pride themselves the most upon the saving virtue of their own opinions. "A ship-owner was about to send to sea an emigrant-ship. He knew that she was old, and not over well built at the first; that she had seen many seas and climes, and often had needed repairs. Doubts had been suggested to him that possibly she was not seaworthy. These doubts preyed upon his mind and made him unhappy; he thought that perhaps he ought to have her thoroughly overhauled and refitted, even though this should put him to great expense. Before the ship sailed, however, he succeeded in overcoming these melancholy reflections. He said to himself that she had gone safely through so many voyages and weathered so many storms that it was idle to suppose she would not come home safely from this trip also. He would put his trust in Providence, which could hardly fail to protect all these unhappy families that were leaving their fatherland to seek for better times elsewhere. He would dismiss from his mind all ungenerous suspicions about the honesty of builders and contractors. In such ways he secured a sincere and comfortable conviction that his vessel was thoroughly safe and seaworthy; he watched her departure with a light heart and benevolent wishes for the success of the exiles in their strange new home that was to be; and he got his insurance money when she went down in mid-ocean and told no tales." This man's conduct of his intellect

was immoral not because he was not convinced of his ship's soundness, but because he had no right to be upon the evidence in his possession. He got his conviction not by the most thorough investigation, but by the stifling of his doubts. His case exactly represents the theological belief of many thousand persons at the present time. They are convinced, but only because they have systematically stifled their doubts. In their ships, too, brave men go down, and they are responsible for their intellectual and moral death. John Keble advised Dr. Arnold to take a curacy and preach the things he doubted, in order that he might believe them. An English bishop charges his flock to treat every doubt as if it were a loaded bombshell with a lighted fuse: throw it out of the mind ere it explodes. Such advice is exactly on a par with the advice to our imaginary ship-owner not to overhaul his vessel. If Dr. Arnold's moral nature had gone to wreck, Keble might justly have been held responsible. But no; he bravely overhauled his vessel, and then sailed far and wide with her the seas of God.

Nor must we fail to notice that as the ship-owner in the story would have been every whit as guilty if his ship had come safely to port with crew and immigrants, so Keble was just as guilty though Dr. Arnold did not take his advice, and so in general the soundness of a man's belief is no sufficient standard of his personal ethics of belief. Better, so far as personal character is concerned, believe a miserable superstition while endeavoring honestly to know the truth, than an

exalted truth while only studying our ease and reputation. To me the truths of rational religion are a hundred times more beautiful and sacred than the creeds and articles of the popular theology, and yet I know that their possession does not necessarily reflect the slightest credit on the men and women who accept and cherish them. The measure of their intellectual seriousness and moral excellence is not the truths they hold, but the mental attitude they have maintained before the problems that have demanded a solution at their hands. "A man may be a heretic in the truth," said Milton, "if he believe things only because his pastor says so or the assembly so determines without knowing other reason; though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy."

The real question, the real touchstone of your character so far as it concerns your various beliefs, is, not what are your beliefs, are they conservative or radical, orthodox or heterodox, but in the formation of them have you had a single eye to truth? Have ease and pleasure, comfort and reputation, fortune and position, been as nothing to you if so be you might behold the bright countenance of Truth, whether in the quiet and still air of delightful studies or in moments snatched with difficulty from the grasp of wearying and corroding cares? If so, whatever your beliefs, *for you* they are the best. But if not so, then, had you grasped the absolute truth of the Almighty, it could not be to *you* the power of God unto salvation.

THE FAITH OF THE DOUBTERS.

DOUBT, scepticism, infidelity, are words that convey much the same meaning to the average Christian mind, and a very disagreeable and even hateful meaning it is. The doubter is habitually spoken of as if he were a dreadful person. If not a sneer, a sigh is thought to be the fit accompaniment of any mention of him. Once he was roundly cursed ; now he is let off with pity ; and those who pity him felicitate themselves upon the beautiful spirit which they show in merely pitying, not cursing him. One of Paul's grandest sayings, "He that doubteth is damned if he eat," is truncated by the omission of the last three words, so that it reads, "He that doubteth is damned," and in this form the text is one of the most popular in the Bible. But what if it should prove that doubt is the obverse of a medal whose reverse is faith; that the doubter, instead of being damned (that is, condemned) either at the bar of his own conscience or at the bar of the generations that succeed him, is there approved and honored? What if, when Tennyson sings,

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds,"

he takes no poetic license, but reports the simple truth? What if the doubters *as such* are or may be believers? That a man may be a doubter and a believer at the same time, no one will be so silly as to deny. He may doubt some things while believing others, as Luther doubted the infallibility of the Church while believing in the infallibility of the Bible. But that the doubter *as such* is often a believer, that any of the faith there is in him, it may be the best and purest, lives *in* the doubt, as Tennyson affirms, this is another matter. It is indeed, and a much more important one. Strange and shocking as this idea may appear to many, it is confirmed by the history of civilization and religion, from the earliest down to the present time.

Tennyson did well to say "in honest doubt." If he had said *in earnest doubt*, he would have done still better. There is doubt which is neither honest nor earnest; doubt which is mere caviling, mere affectation. There may be more faith in this even than in half the creeds as commonly accepted, and still be precious little. "I have my doubts about the authorship of Shakspere," sagely remarks the unearnest would-be literary sceptic. So had Delia Bacon; so has Judge Holmes. But in their doubt there lives an immense amount of faith—faith in the plays, faith that their writer was a great philosopher and no mere manager of plays or actor on the boards. But the unearnest would-be literary sceptic takes up their notion, without weighing any of their arguments, and the only faith there is in his doubt is

faith in his own personal consequence. "I have my doubts about a democratic form of government," says the unearnest would-be political sceptic, unable to distinguish between a momentary eddy and the great onward movement of events; and all the faith there is in such a doubt as his is less than any red republican's of Paris, and hardly more than a Sixth Ward repeater's. "I have my doubts whether there ever was any such person as Jesus," says the unearnest would-be religious sceptic. So had General Hitchcock, who wrote a book quite famous in its day called *Christ, the Spirit*; but his doubt of the actual existence of Jesus was the obverse of his faith in the sect of the Essenes, of whose devout imagination he regarded the gospels and the sublime figure of Jesus as the manifest outcome. But in the mere whim of the ordinary doubter on this head, there lives no faith in any thing but whimsicality and contrariety. It can safely be affirmed that "he that doubteth" in any of these unearnest, unthoughtful, frivolous ways is at least damned to the contracted hell of his own poor egotism and vanity and unearnestness; let us hope also to the accusing hell of his own better hours, and to the purifying hell of social disesteem.

Let it be understood then, once for all, that, when I speak of the faith of the doubters, I do not mean the faith of charlatans and coxcombs, but the faith of earnest, thoughtful men, whose doubts are no mere froth upon the surface of their minds, but their deep ocean currents, not lightly entertained, but feeding on their vital ener-

gies, having their heart and life in them. There are doubters whose doubts are of this sort. The world has never been without them. Let us trust it never will be to the remotest future generations. Such a calamity will be the signal for an immobility and stagnation like that of China, which, at whatever stage of civilization it supervenes, is an intolerable calamity. So far the world has never been without its honest, earnest doubters. And they have not all been monopolized by the religious sphere. We have a way of talking as if doubt were a disease peculiar to the religious constitution. But it is not. Disease or not, no sphere of human thought or action is proof against it. Every profession has and has had its doubters ; every trade, every occupation, every department of human activity. And, so that they have been honest, earnest doubters, *as such* they have been men of faith ; the faith living in the doubt, not merely outside of it or in spite of it ; the doubt being the sign and the expression of the faith.

I do not mean to say that all the men who have been good for any thing since time began have been doubters, or that there is no faith in the world except that which wears the form of doubt. For its best health, the world needs two sorts of men : the sort that hold on and the sort that go ahead ; the conservatives and the progressives ; the men who say, "Let well enough alone," and the men who say, "The best is good enough for me." It needs both kinds to make a world. And it needs more conservatives than progressives ; because

the established order is the result of infinite thought and patience operating through countless generations, and ought not to be at the mercy of any one generation of reformers. For the stability of society, we need a strong majority of conservatives. Honor thy father and mother—the great, the immemorial past—that thy days may be long in the land. And as there are always fanatical doubters, men who think the past of no account, it is absolutely necessary that, to maintain the balance of the world, there should be fanatical conservatives, men who think the past superior to any possible present or future. Absolutely these men are not agreeable to those who differ from them widely, though to their own families and friends they are sometimes much more agreeable than the men whose tendency is strikingly centrifugal. But relatively they are most admirable. The economy of nature makes good use of them. These and the moderate conservatives "maintain the state of the world;" keep all that has been won; hold fast to the embodied patience and fidelity of the innumerable generations of the past. These also have their faith, and it is not mere faith in the past, but faith in the men of the past, and that God has been their God. But if there were no others in the world but these, we should take no step forward. If there had only been these in the past, the past would not be a synonym for evolution from the lowest social forms, as it is now. The history of the past would not be the history of an illimitable progress. In truth, there would be no history at

all. We should still be living in the prehistoric times, for history presupposes legions of doubters and dissatisfied men, without whom society could not emerge from its primeval brutishness. For it is always the faith of the doubters that "there is more truth yet to break out of God's word ;" that the past has not exhausted the capacities of either man or God ; that the best is yet to be ; that there will come a time when our own realized ideals shall look just as barbaric and uncouth to future generations as the realized ideals of by-gone centuries and æons look to us.

There is one very simple way of proving that to speak of the faith of the doubters is to be guilty of no solecism, no contradictory form of speech. For who are the men whom we, of this latest time, regard as pre-eminently men of faith ? Why, to be sure, almost without exception, the men of science, thought, and skill, the leaders and founders who, in their day, were considered doubters, and damned as such to social infamy, if not by church decree to everlasting punishment. Doubters they were, but in their doubt there lived a higher faith than that of the prevailing creeds and customs of their times: a faith in human possibility, a faith, too, in themselves, as meant for great achievements, or in their work so great as to make them almost forgetful of their own existence. But in his own lifetime the majority of men have always frowned upon the doubter, whether the object of his doubt has been some ancient creed or form, or some old way of making files or picking cotton. The present age is

praised continually as being pre-eminently the age of invention, but every new invention in its day has been received with execration. Here, say the majority, is a machine that can be managed by one man or two, and do the work of ten or twenty, or thirty or forty. The laboring man has always hated labor-saving machinery, has always imagined that it takes away his opportunity. The cotton-gin, the steam-engine, the sewing-machine, the loom, the type-setter, the mowing-machine, the horse-rake, the thresher—all these inventions have been met with curses loud or deep; all their inventors have been involved in their unsparing condemnation. Do you think this statement doesn't tally with the fascination which Machinery Hall at the Centennial had for almost everybody, and especially for the tough - handed farmers and mechanics going there? But enter any town where, as in my own native town at the present time, a transition from hand labor to machine labor is taking place, and you will be much more fortunate than I have ever been if you can convince the men who are suffering from this transition, caught between the upper and the nether mill-stones of the opposing systems, that any labor-saving machine ever invented has not been prejudicial to the interests of the laboring class. Few indeed are those who see that such machines, by cheapening production, increase demand so rapidly that not only is there still work enough for all to do, but it is better paid. The English stocking weavers thought it was all over with their trade when some one

dared to doubt whether the old ways of making stockings were the best that could be had, and they cursed the doubter in proportion to their fear. But the event proved that stockings could be made so much more cheaply by the new machinery, that, whereas the multitude had been going stockingless from sheer necessity, they now began to purchase; the demand exceeded the supply, and wages rose, and happiness increased. So it has always been, and so no doubt it will be for a long time to come.* A dozen years ago the capacity of labor-saving machinery in England was equal to six hundred million men, one man doing as much work as two hundred and fifty did a century and a half ago, and yet there is more labor and it has been better paid than when there was no machinery at all. But every man who has contributed to this result by his inventive genius has been a doubter in his day and generation. He has doubted whether the old ways of doing work are the best ways; whether a man should be worn out in doing what an iron horse can do as well or better. But in his doubt there has been a living principle of faith, faith that, so that a thing be well done, the easiest way of doing it is the best way; faith that there will always be work enough for all, and that if there is more leisure it will be so much the better for us all. Do you say that in every such instance the doubt is entirely subordinate to the

* If the desire of artisans for a more comfortable, and decent, and æsthetic life can only keep pace with the improved facilities for production. At present it is apparently lagging behind.

faith ; the faith is the principal thing ? Nay, but it is the first step which costs, and the first step in nearly all inventions and discoveries is a doubt. I say in nearly all, because the approach to some discoveries and inventions is from the scientific side. Necessity is not the only mother of invention. Columbus's doubt whether the shortest way to India was round the cape of Good Hope was antecedent to his faith that it was not. Morse's doubt whether the mail-bag was the best means of communication between distant places was antecedent to his faith that it was not. It is the printer's impatience with the compositor and his stick, his doubt whether this can be the best method of type-setting, that sets him thinking and planning to make a compositor of iron and steel and brass, who will never get intoxicated and will never strike. Sometimes the faith is simultaneous with the doubt ; sometimes it is brought forth after long travail. But even where there is no chronological sequence, the logical sequence is first the doubt and then the faith. The doubt is parent of the faith. Whatever exceptions there may be to this, in view of the fact that some of the greatest discoveries and inventions are made by men working solely under the inspiration of science, not at all under that of use, nor spurred on by necessity, the fact remains that doubt born of mankind's impatience with the hardness of its lot has been the mightiest lever which it has brought to bear on the obstructions in the way of its advancement. Doubting whether some better state might not be possi-

ble for it, the faith in it has followed speedily. This is the rule of human progress. And great as are the discoveries and inventions into which scientific men have blundered while engaged in their great search for scientific truth, these are as nothing in comparison with those, small and great, of infinite variety, which have originated in men's discomfort and impatience, and their doubt whether the causes of their discomfort might not somehow be done away. Let us give honor, then, to every earnest doubter in the realms of discovery and invention, whether he be a Watt, a Stephenson, or the first man who doubted whether a piece of jagged, unwrought stone was the best implement which he could use to further his designs of sustenance or safety.

It sometimes happens that the man who doubts in these external things wakes a responsive echo very soon in human hearts. The seed he plants grows very rapidly, and, even while men say that it will never come to anything, its blossoms wave in air, its fruits drop down upon their senseless heads. In other things the growth is much more slow. In science and in art, in politics and in religion, he that doubteth in any serious and downright fashion is apt to be condemned much longer than the doubter in the sphere of use and skill. Copernicus only saved himself from damning by keeping to himself his great discovery of the earth's subordinate position in the solar system. But in his doubt of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy inhered a faith that the celestial mechanism was infinitely grander and more beautiful

than it had been represented. A year or two ago the political economists celebrated in New York the one hundredth anniversary of the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, a book which revolutionized the theory of political economy, and has well-nigh revolutionized the practice. Smith was a doubter. He doubted the validity of the mercantile system of political economy, the gist of which was that no country or individual could become richer without some other country or individual becoming poorer, and in which inhered the idea that the excess of a nation's exports over its imports is the sure sign of national prosperity ; and for doubting this system he was roundly cursed by his contemporaries. But in his doubt there lived a faith of marvellous beauty and significance ; a faith that the gain of each may be the gain of all ; a faith that exchange between individuals or nations may be a mutual benefit, *must* be where there is no dishonesty. In his own time, the poet who is bold enough to doubt whether he ought to go on singing the dear old strain gets little praise, and not a little scorn. Wordsworth was a doubter. He doubted the infallibility, not of Pope Alexander, but of Alexander Pope and the Augustan age of English poetry. And what a din there was about his ears for his temerity ! But now who doesn't see that there was more faith in Wordsworth's little finger than in the whole of Pope's crooked little body. His doubt of Pope meant faith in nature and reality ; faith in calling things by their right names ; faith in the language of the people

as the armory from which the poet ought to draw the weapons of his song.

Every student of philosophy knows that Aristotle ruled the Middle Ages with a rod of iron. The authority of the Bible is not set up so confidently in religious matters now as the authority of Aristotle in matters of philosophy, five or six centuries ago. He that doubted Aristotle was condemned by all the schools, and the Church lent her thunders to enforce the verdict. But how we reverence to-day the men who broke away from that authority ! How plain it is to us that their doubt of Aristotle, and still more of the miserable scholasticism which mutilated while pretending to interpret him, was faith in larger readings of the problems, physical and metaphysical, which clamored then as now for a solution !

But no class of doubters has in their own day been set aside so fiercely and condemned so loudly as that made up of those whose doubts have touched upon prevailing creeds in morals and religion. Between doubt and religion it has been assumed that there is nothing but antagonism. To doubt is to be an enemy of Christianity, an enemy of religion. No wonder, then, that the religious doubters have had a hard time of it ; that they have been imprisoned, scourged, and crucified ; that they have been obliged to drink poison, and to have molten lead poured down their throats, and have been burned alive in quick fires and slow, by those who thought they had more faith than their poor victims. But now, as from the vantage-ground of the present

we look back over the past, who are the men that tower above the heads of their contemporaries as men of faith? None other than the very men who in their own times were held accursed for their doubts. In England, Latimer and Ridley; in Switzerland, Servetus; in Italy, Giordano Bruno and Savonarola; in Austria, Jerome of Prague and John Huss; in Arabia, Mohammed; in Athens, Socrates; in India, Sakya Mouni; in China, Confucius and Lao Tse; and in Judea, one whose birthday festival at Christmas gathers like the tide, and breaks upon a hundred thousand hearths in waves of gift and song. Were their own times so much mistaken in them, then, as to think them doubters when they were not? No, for they were doubters of the most determined sort. They doubted much that other men believed. Mohammed, whether all those idols in the temple at Mecca were more than so much wasted stone and timber; Confucius, whether all the ghost and goblin worship of his time had any necessary connection with religion; Buddha, whether the stupendous pantheon of the Brahmins or their colossal system of caste had any real validity; and Jesus, whether tithing of mint, anise and cumin, and broadening phylacteries, and praying at the street-corners, standing on one leg or both, were the sum total or the purest aspect of religion. You find it easy enough to doubt all these things. But in the times of Mohammed and Confucius, Gautama and Jesus, it was a tremendous thing to do. Mencius did well to take his coffin with him when he went to see a prince, and leave

it just outside the door, ready for an emergency. The establishments of Arabia and China and India and Judea didn't exaggerate a particle the magnitude or the importance of the doubts which these men entertained. The mistake they made was in not seeing that in all these doubts there lived a faith of infinitely higher import than their own ; in the doubt of Confucius, faith in this present life and the importance of conducting it with justice and sincerity ; in the doubt of Buddha much the same ; in the doubt of Mohammed, faith in one holy omnipresent God, whose highest service is a life of temperance and honesty and truth ; in the doubt of Jesus, a faith in God and man of unexampled height and tenderness ; a faith in simple goodness and mutual helpfulness as the only truly great and eternally indispensable things in the religious sphere.

And what is true of these exalted beings, who stand out from all others in the world's history as the great men of faith, the great believers, is, in a measure, true of all those who, in more modern times, have been branded as infidels and doubters. Even the great French infidels, as they are commonly called, D'Alembert, Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire—not perfect men by any means, and hardly worthy to be spoken of on the same page with the great religious founders of antiquity—men often foolish, sometimes mendacious, sometimes criminal—yes, very faulty men, tremendous doubters, and yet having far more faith in the eternal things than their most orthodox contemporaries, and better men into the

bargain. Voltaire doubted the Infamous, as he called the Roman Catholic Church ; but he believed in Quakerism. He had a boundless faith in justice and humanity. If Rousseau's sentimental faith in God didn't amount to much, nor his conception of social origins, his faith in man and nature is at the root of plenty of our modern nature-worship and humanity. And what a doubter was our own Thomas Paine—our own we have a right and ought to call him—doubting the inspiration of the Bible, doubting the miraculous history of Jesus, doubting the right to be of monarchies and aristocracies. A fearful doubter ! Even to-day the Philadelphia city government refuses to allow the noble bust which my friend Morse has made of him to be placed in Independence Hall, though but for his "Common Sense" it may be Independence Hall would have no such grand associations as it has to-day. I grant you that the victim is not without blemish ; but few in his own day were men of such abounding faith in God and man as he. Some think we have proved already that he had too much faith in man, much more than man deserves. I do not think so. For too much faith in man write too little appreciation of the value and necessity of general and political culture, and you will hit the mark. Another set of doubters were the English Deists of the eighteenth century. Their doubts were not exaggerated by their contemporaries. They cut right and left. They impugned the supernatural Bible, the supernatural Christ, the supernatural Church. But in

their doubts were implicated faiths vastly more sweet and precious than the faiths which they abjured. We call them Deists. It is a name which, in the eighteenth century, summed up a world of scorn, pity, and contempt. To call a man a Deist was worse than calling him a drunkard or a debauchee. What a commentary on the spirit of the age ! For what is a Deist but a man who believes in God ? This was the crime of Tindal and Collins, and Shaftesbury and Herbert, of Cherbury and Blount and Bolingbroke. To this they added the crime of believing very much in human nature, in human reason, and conscience. They doubted that they might the more believe. The so-called faiths of their time appeared to them as poor transparent masks, through which they saw a grinning death's-head doubt of God and man and human life, of God as verily a living God, of man as any thing better than a moral idiot, of human life as good for any thing but a mere stepping-stone from nothingness into a life beyond the grave.

But, not to speak of others who, since their day, have doubted much in order to believe the more, consider for a moment some of the most conspicuous of the doubts which trouble and excite the established churches of the present time, and elicit now their prayers, anon their maledictions. Is there one earnest doubt in the religious world, among those who still account themselves religious, and believe that, in the future as in the past, religion is to be the dearest of all human interests—is there a doubt among these which is

not merely the negative side of some great positive belief? Are not all the leading affirmations of our popular Christianity essentially negative, all the denials of our modern rationalism essentially affirmative and positive? Is there not more faith in the denial of the Unitarian doubt of the Trinity than in the Trinitarian affirmation? For, in denying the Trinity of the God-head, the Unitarian affirms its unity. Now, unity is an essentially affirmative and positive idea of which any sort of complexity is a negation. But the rational religionist doubts the supernatural theory of Christianity. Yes, because, like Confucius, he seeks "an all-pervading unity," a unity of the divine operation, as well as a unity of the divine Being. And in its very essence, how much more positive and affirmative is the idea of such a unity than the idea of a succession of catastrophes and interventions? The faith in these, of which men are so proud, is doubt of the great sweep of universal providence. The doubt of these, which is regarded as so criminal, is faith in omnipresent Deity. The *language* of faith concerning Christ is not infrequently the expression of a fearful lack of faith in God. Men tell us that their thought and feeling about Jesus exhaust their thought and feeling about God: I can only say, If they speak truly, they are greatly to be pitied. For what must be their ideal standards of the Infinite who find them met and satisfied by the person of the historical Jesus? His highest glory pales before my faintest thought of God. But not only is the language of men's faith

in Jesus an expression of their lack of faith in God ; it is also an expression of their lack of faith in man. So long as he is set apart as different in kind, not merely in degree, from all mankind, his sonship orphans all the rest of us. Either he was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, manhood of our humanity, or his greatness was a publication of our littleness. Again, our popular Christianity sets off its faith in the peculiar and miraculous inspiration of the Bible against the doubt of this by rational religionists. Well, superficially, the two things are related in this way : as faith and doubt. But how is it essentially ? Essentially, the popular faith is doubt, is faithlessness. Faith in the special thing is lack of faith in the greater and more universal. Belief that God has spoken in the Bible means doubt that he has spoken anywhere beside. Only because the denial of rationalism is later in time than the supernatural claim does it seem negative. Essentially it is positive. It affirms the larger fact, the fact of universal inspiration. Which is the higher faith, that in the Bible we have “ the complete *remains* ” of Deity, or that

“ The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.”

And so it is with every leading article of the supernatural creed. The formal affirmation masks an essential doubt. The formal doubt contains a larger affirmation. It is so with the doctrine of the atonement. It is so with the doctrine of the incarnation. Atonement and incarnation are not

special facts, but universal laws. The old faiths, without exception, are faithless in their implications. The new doubts, almost without exception, are implicitly upon the side of faith. And even the exceptions, if indeed they be such, are not so faithless as the ancient creeds which still find nominal adherents. Büchner's doubt if there be any God is more consoling than faith in such a God as Calvin's. Büchner's doubt of immortality is better than Calvin's certainty of hell, and Calvin's own elect would say so if they had a chance.

A night or two ago, I sat down and read an hour or more in Frederick Faber's hymns. He is accounted the greatest hymn-writer after Keble that modern England has produced. He was one of the Tractarians who followed Dr. Newman into the Roman church. The language of faith abounds in his hymns to an astonishing degree. And, here and there, there is faith in the ideas—a faith sweet and sublime and strong and beautiful. Take, for example, such a stanza as I read at the beginning of this morning's service.* But for the most part there is doubt of

* “ God is never so far off
As even to be near ;
He is within ; our spirit is
The home He holds most dear.
To think of Him as by our side,
Is almost as untrue
As to remove His throne beyond
Those skies of starry blue.
So all the while I thought myself
Homeless, forlorn, and weary,
Missing my joy, I walked the earth,
Myself God's sanctuary.”

man and God and all the gracious orderings of nature and of human life. A single stanza gives the key-note of well-nigh the whole performance :

“ And yet we long and long to die,
We covet to be free,
Not for thy great rewards, O God !
Not for thy peace, but Thee.”

Some may call that the ecstasy of faith. To me it seems the ecstasy of denial and despair. God, then, it seems is not here, but away off there beyond the hills of death. If this is faith, the more we doubt the better. If I cannot believe in God right here, in this life, the only life with which I have yet had any acquaintance, I will not believe in him at all. But thus far in the world's history it has always been regarded as a proof of faith to think meanly of this present life and very grandly of some other. That is like saying we have great faith in the genius of Beethoven, but despise the seventh symphony and, in fact, all the music of his writing we have ever heard.

But in all fairness it must be confessed that there are doubters in these latter days whose faith is not so patent as the faith of those who simply doubt or sturdily deny the various articles of the prevailing creed. There are men who doubt not only whether there is any God, but also whether there is any Man, or will be when this present concourse of atoms ceases from its organic functions. That faith can coexist even with such doubts as these is not to be denied. Doubtful of God and immortality, a man may still have faith in the order and beauty of a self-existing uni-

verse, faith in his work, faith in his friendships and his loves, faith in this life's completeness in itself, so that it needs no other life beyond to piece it out into perfection. But can it be affirmed that any faith *lives in the doubts* of doubters such as these? Perhaps not always, and yet, oftentimes, I am persuaded that in the honest atheistic doubt there lives more faith than in the garrulous creeds of the majority. For what is really doubted is not so much that there is *any* God as that there is any such as is reported in the creeds, as that any human speech can tell the ineffable secret. Oh, my dear friends, we are all of us too talkative about the mystery of mysteries :

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“ Him who dare name and yet proclaim,
Yes, I believe.”

So long as we are content to rest in feeling, all is well. But the moment we begin to speak, our words are trivial and false. There is more faith in the silence of some men than in the garrulity of others. But is it so in regard to immortality as well as in regard to God? It surely may be, so long as the faith in God remains. For then the doubt of immortality may only be the negative expression of the faith that if it is best for us to be immortal we shall be so; but, if we are not, then will it be because it is not best for us to be. This is the highest, deepest faith of all. I would that all our faith in immortality might be sustained in this invigorating, stainless air, that it might lose itself in it as, when the lark becomes “a sightless song,” he loses himself in

the infinite space of heaven. But better far this faith without the faith in immortality than the faith in immortality without the faith in this. But suppose one hasn't faith in this, then can his doubt of immortality by any possibility contain an element of faith? I think it can, and faith of no mean order—faith in the capabilities of matter, that out of it and it alone should come this thinking soul, that recognizes it as its progenitor. I cannot think this faith is warranted. Matter *plus God* may well do any thing, but matter *minus God* not much. And yet this faith, methinks, is infinitely truer than the no-faith in matter, the scorn and curse of it, that has been characteristic of the bulk of human thought from the beginning.

Last, but not least, this word remains to say : There may inhere, there necessarily *does* inhere, in doubts that cut right to the heart of the most precious faiths humanity has ever cherished, so that they be honest, earnest doubts, a faith in honesty and earnestness ; that it is better to be nobly true and simple and sincere with one's own self than to believe any thing, however sacred or consoling ; that no good can come from putting the telescope to a blind eye, and pretending that we do not see, or to a clear, far-sighted eye, and pretending that we see when we do not. This is the highest faith : faith that no real good can come to us except along the path of our own personal integrity; that one atom of this should never go in barter for the gladdest, freest faith in God or the immortal life.

" Upon the white sea sand
There sat a pilgrim band,]
Telling the losses that their lives had known,
While evening waned away
From breezy cliff and bay,
And the strong tides went out with weary moan.

" Some talked of vanished gold,
Some of proud honors told,
Some spake of friends that were their trust no more ;
And one of a green grave
Beside a foreign wave,
That made him sit so lonely on the shore.

" But when their tales were done
There spake among them one—
A stranger, seeming from all sorrow free—
' Sad losses have ye met,
But mine is heavier yet,
For a believing heart hath gone from me.'

" ' Alas ! ' these pilgrims said,
' For the living and the dead,
For fortune's cruelty and love's sure cross,
For the wrecks of land and sea !
But, however it came to thee,
Thine, stranger, is life's last and heaviest loss ! ' "

What is this loss of the *believing heart* which of all losses is the heaviest ? Not, I am sure, the loss of faith in any doctrine of a supernatural religion ; no, nor even the loss of faith in those great supports and consolations common well-nigh to all sects and to all religions, though these are infinitely precious. But it is the loss of faith in simple truth, of thought and speech and life, as the one island which no sea can overwhelm—the one final and imperishable good, in comparison with which all other faiths, however precious, are a very little thing.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

ABOUT a year ago I invited your attention to a question which at that time was occupying a good deal of space in periodical literature, and enlisting a good deal of general interest : What would be the effect upon morality of a decline in religious belief? The first result to which we arrived was that the question was somewhat obscure ; religious belief, in its best sense, including moral belief. A decline in moral belief would undoubtedly be highly prejudicial to morality, though the decline of some beliefs that are accounted moral might be the signal for a real moral advance. The next result of our discussion was that, leaving moral beliefs out of the question, the decline of religious beliefs had in the course of history been highly advantageous to morality. The belief in witchcraft, for example, was wholly religious. It claimed the warrant of a Bible text for its extremest penalty. Offenders were compelled to plead for life before ecclesiastical tribunals. The decline of this belief has surely been of great advantage to morality. And so too has the decline of the belief that persecu-

tion is the right and duty of the orthodox, if haply they would save the heterodox from everlasting burnings, or deter the many from heretical excursions by the example of the few. A more immoral doctrine never claimed the suffrage of mankind. But it was eminently religious. Romanists and Protestants vied with each other in devotion to its monstrous claim. The decline of this belief has been the most conspicuous event of modern times, and the moral significance of it does not admit of any question. But these beliefs were but exponents of an exhaustive system of religion, the decline of which has synchronized with the advance of civilization from the earliest times. Aside from morals, religious belief in past times has been the belief in supernatural interference with the order of the world. But this belief has been steadily declining all the ages down, and as steadily morality has been advancing; nor would it be impossible to prove that we have here no mere coincidence, but the most vital correlation, so that the verdict of history would seem to be that a decline of religious belief is positively beneficial to morality.

Or take the example of a belief which is to some extent still current among Christian men—the belief in salvation by faith alone. Can the decline of this belief be asserted in the face of recent exhibitions? Here the evangelists, insisting that it is the scarlet thread which runs all through the Bible, and that you cannot get it out without destroying the Bible any more than you can get out the red thread in a British royal navy rope

without destroying the rope ; and there the Boston lectureship, asserting that this doctrine is in “ the nature of things.” It may seem presumptuous to assert the decline of this belief in the face of such contemporary developments, but it will not if you will compare Mr. Cook’s or Mr. Moody’s statements of it with the statements of Martin Luther, which are too gross for public repetition. Such a comparison will convince you that our modern doctrine of salvation by faith alone is but the faintest shadow of this doctrine as it was held three centuries ago—that, as then held, it was actually and unavoidably prejudicial to morality ; to continue in sin, that grace might abound, was the almost necessary practical inference. And even in our day the almost universal coincidence of this belief with political and commercial fraud hints at an immoral influence residing even in this pale shadow of the ancient faith which haunts our modern dreams. Who so pious as these defaulting financiers, whose rank offences “ smell to heaven” in such swift succession in these latter days ! And what more natural than that men who are habitually taught that morality has nothing whatever to do with salvation, and that salvation is the one great concern, should come to hold their moral obligations in such light esteem that they are wholly disregarded ? Here, then, is a religious belief, the decline of which so far has wrought immeasurable good ; the decline of which still further is a consummation devoutly to be wished. All who have any interest in political or personal purity, or in financial honor and

security, are bound to give no quarter to this doctrine of salvation by faith alone, but to mete out to it the righteous disrespect and scorn which it deserves.

Strangely enough, however, the discussions of this question which have so far taken place have scarcely mentioned this religious belief. These discussions have for the most part proceeded on the assumption that the *only* religious beliefs are those which have God and Immortality for their objects, and in asking what would be the effect upon morality of a decline in religious belief, no more has been intended than, What would be the effect of a decline of these particular beliefs? The appeal to history is not so easy here as with some other beliefs. No general decline of these, it may be, can be predicated. The development of Buddhism, however, was certainly marked by an immense decline of the beliefs in God and Immortality in comparison with Brahminism, the parent faith. But this decline was notably coincident with an immense improvement in morality. Again, Confucianism has been denied the right of being called a religion, so little emphasis it places on the ideas of God and Immortality. Nevertheless, it has been and is more moral than any other Eastern Asiatic faith. The Hebrew people always had a strong belief in one god or more, but it was singularly free from any definite belief in Immortality. When this belief was generated the people was long past its prime. The grandest representatives of the Jewish faith were the monotheistic prophets of the eighth, seventh,

and sixth centuries B.C. These had no particle of faith in Immortality, but men more moral never saw the sun. But perhaps it may be allowed that men can be intensely moral without any belief in Immortality, so long as they believe in God with all their mind and heart.

But when all things have been considered the upshot of the whole matter appears to be this : Whether a decline in men's belief in God and Immortality has an improving or a damaging effect on their morality, depends entirely upon the character of the God in whom, the sort of Immortality in which, the declining belief inheres. For it is quite possible for men to believe in such a god and such an immortality that the result of their beliefs upon the moral side shall be only degrading. The god, belief in whom uplifts and sanctifies, must be the offspring of a moral ideal, serene and holy. The immortality, belief in which is morally advantageous, must be no mere projection of our sensuousness or selfishness upon the void of the eternal years. The savage god of the old Hebrew race made men more savage. They imitated the divine vengeance. David was a man after his own heart ; he being first a god after David's own heart —cruel and vengeful, liking the smell of blood. The Greeks enthroned licentiousness upon Olympus and worshipped it. What wonder that their social and domestic life continually reproduced the follies of the gods ! that mortal women were as passionate as the celestial Aphrodite, and mortal men as tricky as the divine Hephaestus !

The sensual heaven of Mohammed has much to answer for. Its earthly counterpart has been that hot-bed of intrigue and fratricide—the grand seraglio. The wonder is that earthly drunkenness has not responded to the prophet's vision of the flowing bowls of paradise. Men are but seldom better than their divine ideals ; their earth is seldom better than their imaginary heavens. The image of a persecuting god has ever been the persecutor's fiercest inspiration. “If God has cursed the children of Ham,” said to me a young man who had just got his epaulets in our late war, “what right have we to try and help them out?” His body was broken for them before the war was over.

Whether or not, therefore, the absolute extinction of belief in God and Immortality would have a damaging effect upon morality, nothing is surer than that such belief is not necessarily by any means a source of moral inspiration. If the god in whom it inheres is loving, pure, and holy ; if the immortality is the imagined scene of consecrated toil and deathless love and glorified intelligence ; then its decline may well be a tremendous disadvantage, unless it can be matched by the development of other hopes and confidences of a yet more inspiring quality. But as the belief goes among us, in God or Immortality, it is not often, much I fear, a source of moral inspiration. Men are happier for it, more comfortable ; but are they any better? Rather they leave to God the work they ought to do with patient human hands, postponing until after death the heaven which

they ought to build upon the earth by hard endeavor. "Ye believe in God," the Apostle said. "Ye do well; the devils also believe and tremble." I do not know about the devils—even doubt if there be any. But men there are by millions who so believe in God that only trembling comes of it, uncertain steps and mumbled speech and feeble hands, when He can be believed in as the invariable order of the world, and so become a power of never-failing steadfastness—"the rock of our salvation."

The question we have been considering assumes too much that religious belief, however unstable in its quantity, is perfectly stable in its quality. In fact its quantity is the more stable of the two. It is its quality which is pre-eminently variable. And by what is its quality affected? By conditions of climate and race, by degrees of civilization, by various social conditions, by miserable or comfortable living—think you that men to whom existence was a joy and blessing would ever have conceived Nirvana as the final good?—by culture and intelligence. Shall we leave out morality? If not, the question, What would be the effect upon religion of a rise in morality? may not be less important or suggestive than that which the symposiasts have discussed so learnedly: What would be the effect upon morality of a decline in religious belief?

What would be the effect upon religion of a rise in morality? By divination of the past we are best qualified to divine the future. What has been the effect upon religion of a rise in morality in times

past? So far as religion has been moral, the statement of the question goes a long way to answer it. If morality rises, so much of the religion as is moral rises necessarily. And it has so long been customary for us and for those whose traditions we inherit to associate religion and morality that it is very difficult for us to imagine a time when there was not a close and vital relation between the two. The average conception of religion is as a scheme of retribution, in virtue of which the Deity proportions to the good or evil of our present life certain rewards and penalties in a life beyond the grave. And we are apt to think and speak as if religion had always presented itself to human thought in some such shape as this. But in fact the average ecclesiastical presentation of religion in our own times assumes this shape only casually and accidentally. Protestant orthodoxy represents the joys of heaven and the pains of hell as being conditional, not upon moral character, but upon faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. Mr. Moody insists that honesty and temperance and other moral virtues are only better than their opposite vices for this world: they have nothing whatever to do with our eternal welfare. The Roman Church is not a whit more moral. Not private character, but sacramental conformity, is the secret charm to which the gates of heaven open and admit us to the blissful seats. In simple truth, all moral life upon the Protestant or Roman theory of religion is a work of supererogation. It is so much over-measure. It is not

in the bond. And the further back we go in Christian history—if we do not go back too far, and come upon the time when morals and religion coincided in the first Christian centuries—we find men more and more unconscious that religion and morality have anything to do with each other. The Roman church five centuries ago had a quick scent for heresy, and immediately suppressed a book that was tainted with it ever so slightly. But it never thought of suppressing books that were marvels of obscenity. Popes and cardinals read them with avidity and patronized their authors. There was not a more religious man in Italy than Benvenuto Cellini. St. Catherine of Siena was not more ecstatic in her piety. But at the same time his life from first to last was a tissue of debauchery and murder; nor is there any evidence that he considered his religion in the least injuriously affected by the manner of his life. Go back still further—to the time of the Homeric epics—and the dissociation of religion and morality is not less complete. There is honor among thieves, but there was not much among Olympian gods and goddesses. Licentiousness and treachery were their habitual traits. And naturally enough they did not require a moral service from their worshippers. The customary sacrifices satisfied their requisitions. And going back still further towards the dawn of history and the beginnings of religion and morality, we find that these two forces instead of being twins from the beginning were not even born of the same parents, and that for a long time their

paths were less frequently parallel than divergent. The primitive religions represented the gods as dispensing good and evil fortune, crops and herds and children, famine and blight, but without much, if any, reference to good or evil conduct. And from the beginning until now it has not been religion that has improved morality, but morality that has improved religion. No doubt the religion thus improved reacts on the morality, so that religious beliefs are never unimportant from a moral point of view. But nothing could be wider of the mark than the idea which is so frequently advanced, that religion has been and is the primal fount of moral inspiration. On the contrary, all that is best in religion has had a moral origin. Instead of religion (as distinct from morals) being the grand inspirer of morality, morality has been the constant force which has purged religion of its dross, refined it, purified it, and made it worthy of the suffrages of earnest and enlightened men. Little by little, as moral ideas have been evolved, religion has slowly and grudgingly adopted them into her sphere and given them out again as her own supernatural discoveries.

What has been the effect upon religious beliefs of a rise in morality? To give such beliefs a certain moral bearing. The god of the ancient Hebrews, for example, was the dispenser of material blessings. The rise of Hebrew prophecy was a rise in morality. What did this rise in morality effect? It effected a revolution of the ground of the god's approval from burnt-offerings and

sacrifices to justice and mercy and truth. Material blessings wait upon these moral attitudes. It was not absolutely true. But it was truer than the theory which it displaced. And as an error it was a vastly better error than the first ; vastly more honorable to god and man. Again, the effect of a rise in morality has always been to purify men's thoughts of God and Immortality. Within the limits of the Old Testament we have the god represented as making himself merry with wine, as matching perfidy with perfidy, and so on. With the development of higher moral perceptions it became impossible for men to cherish such ideas. And so among the Greeks it was the development of higher moral perceptions that destroyed the authority of the mythological deities. The moral ideal of Athens imposed itself upon Olympus. The gods must be at least as virtuous as the average citizen. Lying and subterfuge were trivial vices with the Christian fathers, and so they did not hesitate to attribute them to God. For centuries the average theory of the atonement represented God as outwitting the devil by a miserable equivocation. But for a rise in morality somewhere along the line, such would have been the theory of the atonement to this day. And it is still sufficiently immoral. These scattered instances betray a universal tendency. Despite the almost universal divorce of religion and morality insisted on from the religious side, such is the tendency of morality, like water, to seek its own level, that everywhere as morals have improved the effect

upon religious beliefs has been noticeable. Men have made god in their own image. As they have become more pure, more honest, more gentle, more loving, they have reflected back on him these various attributes, and then the ideal thus purified has reacted upon those who have engendered it, and upon millions of their fellow-beings, who have no suspicion that in fact the procession of the Holy Spirit reverses the abstraction of the creeds. There it proceeds through the Son *from* the Father. Here it proceeds through the Son, through all good men, *to* the Father, who ever rises to the height of men's most lofty aspiration. Such is the meaning of the most notable expression we have had so far from Robert Ingersoll : " An honest god's the noblest work of man."

The thing that has been will be. As in past times the effect of a rise in morality upon religious beliefs has been to purify and sweeten them, so it will be till time shall be no more. For morality has not yet risen so high, and religion is not yet so exalted, that there is no room for any further improvement. There is more than one religious belief, even among Christian men, which only waits a finer moral sentiment in man to go shivering away into a limbo from which it shall never be recalled. Living in the time of Francis First, whose arbitrary will alone was law, Calvin conceived a God who was another Francis, projected on an infinite scale, whose arbitrary will alone was right. And hence a system of theology which was of injustice and cruelty all compact, to which men still subscribe, and which in

ever lessening degrees the ministers of wrath still fulminate from their mahogany Olympus. It only needs a moral sentiment that can discern that might can never be the source of right in God or man, to banish the last vestige of this system from the society of decent men. The Unitarianism of sixty years ago is frequently accused of having been exclusively an intellectual movement. Never was any movement more misunderstood. Considered at its best, it was *a rise in morality*; no less—it could have been no more. Channing—he was a smokeless flame of moral sentiment. It was not the intellectual incongruity and absurdity of such doctrines as the fall of man, total depravity, vicarious atonement, that made his tiny form expand with giant indignation. It was the immorality which they ascribed to God and which they encouraged in mankind. Goodness, the one great thing in man, in Christ, in God—the greatest thing in all the universe—that was the heart of Channing's affirmation; and until a broader, deeper, higher can be found, no man need fear to call himself a Unitarian, albeit some who flaunt the name—ay, call themselves “Channing Unitarians”—would hear from his pure lips, “Depart from me, I never knew you,” if he were here to know that men have made a bulwark of his name, from behind which they shoot their poisoned arrows at the advanced guard of science, and at all who cannot wear their uniform or speak their shibboleth.

One thing at least is certain : a rise in morality, so it were to such a height that men might see

that "mere morality" is the one noblest, highest, grandest thing under the scope of heaven, would have a very serious effect on any doctrine which assigns to morality a secondary place in matters of religion. It is only because our morality is languid and imperfect that "faith" is suffered to usurp the highest place. Let there be a rise in morality, let it rise into serene self-consciousness of its own pre-eminent worth and glory, and we shall dare affirm that any "salvation" which can dispense with righteousness, or to which righteousness is not of all things the most indispensable, is a salvation to which we can afford to be absolutely indifferent.

"The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred seven ;
But thou, meek lover of the good,
Find me and turn thy back on heaven."

Would not a rise in morality also have some serious effect upon our methods of church management—upon the outward form and administration of religion? If there could be such a rise and it could be something considerable, should we have ministers of religion in times of general extravagance and show encouraging the popular madness, and plunging congregations hundreds of thousands of dollars deep in debt for churches of hewn stone or corrugated iron, and then resorting to devices for the salvation of their pride and property that would be an unspeakable disgrace to any secular organization? If we could have a rise in morality, would ministers pledge

themselves personally for generous amounts in order to encourage others to be charitable, and then not redeem their own pledges? Would they make a great ado about preaching the Gospel to the poor and then defraud insurance companies and savings institutions out of the "little all" of widows and orphans and hard-working, self-denying artisans?* If we could have a rise in morality, would not the poor prefer to pay directly for having the Gospel preached to them to being thus involuntarily assessed? And in that case should we have special collects written, avowedly addressed to the Almighty, but in reality to the members of the congregation? Does anybody really believe, in these last days, that any number of special collects would induce the Almighty to concentrate for a moment all the infinite forces of the universe upon the reluctant purse-strings of a pious millionaire, if haply what should never have been done may seem to win the approving smile of Heaven? And if nobody does believe this, would not a rise in morality, so it were great enough, make it impossible for any body of generally intelligent and moral men and women to pretend to believe it, without laughing in each other's faces—as the old Roman augurs used to every time they had a private meeting?

The story goes that when a bishop is to be elected in the English Church the queen sends a leave to elect to the dean and prebends of the

* An inspector of rotten insurance companies informs me that the loss of money upon church property mortgaged to them is one of the most conspicuous causes of the ruin of so many companies.

cathedral, and at the same time the name of the person whom they are to elect. "They go into the cathedral, chant and pray, and beseech the Holy Ghost to assist them in their choice ; and after these invocations proceeding to an election, they invariably find that the dictates of the Holy Ghost agree with the recommendations of the queen." Is this particular instance much of a caricature on a vast amount of our religious profession ? How many of our religious forms are absolutely meaningless ! How many of our religious phrases have in them no heart of truth and soberness ! How many of our prayers we do not expect to have God answer ! Are there not some of them we should dislike to have him answer very much ? Given a rise in morality, and would not our forms, our phrases, and our prayers adjust themselves much more closely to our real thoughts and sentiments and wishes ? And as a consequence of such a rise should we not be much more careful in the expression of our opinions about many things ? Should we not abjure a vast amount of rhetoric which now we lavish upon Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount ? Who of those who praise the Sermon on the Mount most wantonly really attempt to make it the standard of their own personal conduct, turning their other cheek to the smiter, taking no thought for the morrow, giving to all who ask of them, and to those who steal their property making a voluntary gift ? Given a rise in morality and we should either make these texts the rules of our behavior, or we should cease from

winning for ourselves an orthodox repute by cheap rhetorical expressions. "So it seems the Sermon on the Mount isn't good enough for Mr. Frothingham," some one remarks, and adds, "It's good enough for me." Too good, apparently; for else why no attempt to reproduce in life its unambiguous requirements?

Whatever the effect would be upon religious beliefs of a rise in morality, may we not safely predicate that one effect of such a rise would be to make men much less talkative about some things concerning which they are now extremely garrulous? Concerning the high themes of God and Immortality, how great soe'er our trust, we know so little that it is the part of wisdom and morality to refuse to dogmatize, to be often silent, to be very tender and patient with those who cannot train their lips to make what we esteem the most essential affirmations. "Believe as I do, or I will kill you!" the orthodox believer has thundered at the sceptic and the infidel. But with a general rise in morality we should have a rise in the particular morality of opinion and belief which, once attained, we should perceive that not the thing believed, but the believer's attitude of patience and sincerity, is the only proper standard of merit or demerit so far as his opinions are concerned; and that therefore some who are least able to make the common affirmations are infinitely more commendable than some who can enunciate them all without a particle of hesitation. Let morality rise high enough, and I am persuaded that belief or disbelief of the most

central doctrines of religious speculation will no longer be regarded as legitimate objects of our praise and honor, or of our blame and shame. Let morality rise high enough, and however we may still rejoice in the consent of others to beliefs which seem to us most precious, for those who cannot go with us we shall abate our love and honor in no least degree if we are well persuaded that they have simply sought to know that which is true, help that which is good, and do that which is right.

So, then, whether religious beliefs, greater or less, decline or otherwise, and whatever the effect of such decline, or growth, God grant that we may see and help along such a rise in morality as shall make our various beliefs more honorable to God and man, as shall make our religious management less likely to be shamed by the every-day conduct of our secular affairs, as shall make our prayers and phrases more harmonious with our actions and desires ; and which, last but not least, shall render us less patient with our own dogmatism and presumption concerning the deep things of God, and far more patient with the modesty and silence of those who, where they only think and hope and trust, dare not insist they know.

THE STATE OF THE NATION.

IT was formerly the custom at least twice a year, on Fast-day and at Thanksgiving-time, for teachers of religion to remind their hearers that they were not only individuals, not only members of a family circle, or of a church or town community, but also citizens of a great nation, and to invite them to consider *the state of the nation*, if haply so considering some path of public duty might be made more plain, some public sin be dragged to light, some public danger be proclaimed in time to be averted. This custom has never fallen into entire disuse, but since the war for liberty and honor, and the immediately succeeding agonies of reconstruction, the preacher has been more content than he was formerly upon these special occasions to dwell in a region of sentiment, to be poetical about the grapes and corn, and to leave questions of a more special nature for the newspapers and the politicians to debate and settle. The reason for this change is obvious to some extent. For many years before the war the idea generally prevailed in ministerial minds that there was really but one national sin, and that the sin of slavery. And although it was sometimes a test of courage for the minister to say his plainest word about this

of the times which demands some brief consideration. The old theology has lost its hold upon the more intelligent and cultivated people in America. But in the majority of cases, instead of boldly declaring their convictions, these keep up a show of orthodox belief and worship. If now and then they have a twinge of conscience and consult the rector or the minister, he confesses privately that he is very much of their opinion. Asked to read a certain service in a certain church, I declined. "Why," said the gentlemanly warden, "two thirds of the congregation put their own construction on these words. Why can't you do the same?" And so we go. The ignorance of the community is still implicitly devoted to the popular theology. The intelligence of the community keeps up an appearance which has no basis of reality. It is this state of things which might well make Ezra Stiles exclaim, if he were living now, "It is the darkest day that ever America saw."

To these phenomena of mercantile dishonesty and unspiritual religion add the phenomena of wide-spread discontent prevailing in the industrial classes, the communistic schemes that form the staple of a world of senseless talk and lawless aspiration, which would make the general government a gigantic soup-house and compel its legislation to reflect the shifty sentiments of the untutored population, together with the spectacle of ignorant or malicious demagogues appealing to all that is most selfish, mean, and sordid in the human heart—and you have a horoscope which is

not so cheerful as might be ; which is indeed, and to no small degree, discouraging and ominous of ill. To cry peace, peace, when there is no peace is not the part of wisdom certainly. But no more is it the part of wisdom to exaggerate the popular discontent. The greater part of it is superficial, caused by the stress of present suffering and the enforced economies of our return to honest ways from our excursions into the illimitable void. Let there be honesty and frugality, with the readjustment of labor so that the overstocked departments of trade and manufacture shall make over their surplus to the short-handed agriculturists, and, with the return of general activity, even without the false and lying appearance of prosperity which we have left behind us, Kearney and his fellow-demagogues would, if I am not mistaken, find their occupation gone. For the rest, our hope of rescue from the vague unrest or practical result of communistic speculations lies in the education of the whole community, not merely of the poor and uneducated, but of the rich who have the form without the substance of enlightenment. When men of much apparent culture and intelligence advocate the conversion of our city government into a great labor bureau, as if the city had a private mine and mint at its disposal, or as if the burden of taxation were not already greater than the majority can bear, it is a sign that ignorance of the first principles of political economy is not confined to manual laborers, but is an omnipresent evil. But there is intelligence in the community which only needs a challenge sharp

enough to prove with overwhelming force that this great reformatory idea of a paternal bureaucratic government is one which we have been painfully disengaging ourselves from for hundreds of years ; one which has always been the stepping-stone of tyrants to their thrones ; and one which has ever been "the first and therefore the falsest that meets the mind when it begins to reflect on the reform of human society." If, with all the hoarded learning it has got from centuries of experience, the aggregate intelligence of modern society is not able to meet the great reformatory idea of a paternal, bureaucratic, communistic government in a fair field and "give it all it wants," then it deserves to be humiliated to the last degree. Well said John Milton, "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple ; who ever knew Truth to be put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

But the quarter from which I expect the greatest help in the solution of this labor problem, as we call it, is practical, not intellectual or argumentative. For it is from the justice and the faithfulness of individual men who in their various positions of responsibility shall carry themselves so wisely, so forbearingly, so tenderly, that they shall not only convince those in employment under them that the interests of capital and labor are identical, but shall make them each and all apostles of this doctrine up and down the land.

And yet it well may be that in all these formless discontents and foolish aspirations there is the promise and the potency of some more equitable

distribution of that wealth, which is the joint product of capital and labor, than we have yet attained unto. I am by no means sure that the exact relative value of the brains and hands concerned in all manufacturing is fairly expressed by the relative profits of the employer and employed. The world is still young, and it would be very strange if we had got already to the highest point attainable in these concerns and need not keep our minds open and receptive to some further revelation.

Moreover, in these discontents and aspirations, may there not be a hint that our political economy, though excellent in its own sphere, does not exhaust the social problem in its entirety? Within the sphere of political economy it is a lawful saying, "He that will not work shall not eat." But there are those who cannot work, and, even of those who *will* not, the unwilling will is sometimes a disease as positive as cholera or typhus. These are phenomena of which our political economy takes no account. So then our social science, inspired by our Christianity or such other religion as we have, must take account of them. Here is the sphere for our paternal government. It is not for men and women "full-summed in all their powers," but for the weaklings and the drones; those to be cared for with a divine compassion, these to be dealt with firmly and compelled to earn their right to live.

It is not, then, to be denied that in *the state of the nation*, considered not merely as a working government but also as a society of upwards of

forty millions of men, women, and children, there is much that is not as those who love America would have it, much that is ill and portentous of yet greater ill to come. And in all the horoscope the most baleful star is that which ought to shine with the most cheerful light, the pole-star of religion. And yet I cannot doubt that out of all these sorrows and distresses the Spirit will yet lead us up and on. "He will bring upon us fear and dread and trial. He will torture us with the tribulation of his discipline, till he try us by his laws and test our soul. Then he will strengthen us and make our way straight for us and give us joy."

But one word more and I will end your weariness. It may be that you are asking, If these things are so, what ought a man to do who would acquit himself right manfully? Some hints I trust I have given on the way, but the one thing that he should do, and can, is to see to it that one single individual, namely himself, in the midst of whatever falsehood is true, in the midst of whatever dishonesty is honest, in the midst of whatever insincerity is sincere, and that, in the midst of whatever religion of glorified irresponsibleness, his religion is to him first and foremost a principle and law of righteousness. So doing, haply it shall be made plain to him how he can help in other ways to make America a righteous nation whose God is the Eternal,

COMFORT IN RELIGION.

A COMPARISON is frequently made between supernatural and rational religion, in respect to the amount of comfort which is derivable from them respectively. And this comparison is very unfavorable to the latter. Its views of God and Immortality, of Providence and Prayer, are charged with being cold and comfortless, and the assumption is that the views of the prevailing supernaturalism in regard to all these things are warm and comforting. Its related doctrines of sin and forgiveness are also contrasted with those of rational religion, with apparently the same result. Its God expands the human tenderness of Jesus to an infinite degree. Its immortality is truly blessed. Its ideal of this, whatever it was once, is no longer exhausted by psalm-singing, or the contemplation from the height of heaven of the sufferings of the damned who welter in the deep below. Liberalism helps its own case but little, and does not help the struggling world at all, by still continuing to represent these odious and ridiculous features of a dying creed as still thoroughly characteristic. The immortality of the best mod-

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ern orthodoxy is an immortality of glad reunions with the lost of other years, of growth in goodness and in love, of beatific vision of the transcendent wisdom, power, and holiness of God. Granted that not infrequently the picture that would fain allure is coarse and mean. Granted that absolute annihilation would be infinitely preferable to a heaven so idle and inane as that of many a showman in the churches. The fact remains that many orthodox believers cherish a dream of heaven that is pure and sweet and noble and exalting. And if as much cannot be said for their belief in Providential interference, it will not be denied that there do inhere in this elements of comfort which do not inhere in the beliefs of rational religion. This may have others, but it has not the same. It cannot assure the heart, bereft of its most precious objects of affection, that God has taken these away, either for their advantage or for the discipline of its own warring passions or imperfect faith. This the popular theology can always do. It can represent death as the result of a deliberate and isolated fiat of the omnipotent will, and such comfort as inheres in such a representation it can always give to those for whom this representation has as yet lost nothing of its validity. And that there may be comfort inhering in such a representation—that there is for tens of thousands of bereaved and aching hearts, is not to be denied. And as with the popular doctrine of Providence, so with the popular doctrine of prayer, with which it is so closely kin. Certainly it is very

comforting to believe, as George Müller honestly does believe, that charitable institutions can be supported by the prayers of those who have their management in charge. Begging of men for the support of such institutions is never quite agreeable. We always feel somehow as if we were begging for ourselves. But no such qualms afflict us when our petition is preferred to the invisible God. So, too, it must be very comforting to believe that the verbal "prayer of the righteous man availeth much" to raise up the sick and bring them back to life and health again, or that an evil heart, be it one's own or another's, may be made good by agonized entreaty. Naturally enough the comfort that is derivable from such a creed would suffer some abatement from the strain of praying twenty years in vain for the conversion of a single vagrant sheep, though Mr. Müller, who has done this himself, apparently has not been so affected. And so again with the related doctrines of sin and forgiveness. It must be a very comfortable assurance that "Jesus paid the debt, Jesus paid it all," and that however sorely we may have transgressed the laws of life, acceptance of his death as our atonement discharges us from all the penalties which naturally await on such transgression. Rational religion also has its doctrine of forgiveness, but it is very different from this. For here forgiveness is only another word for the recuperative forces of the universe, and is to be appropriated only by long and painful efforts to undo the wrong that we

have done, or do some counterbalancing or counteracting good.

Another particular in which the popular religion claims for itself an infinite superiority to rational religion, so far as comfort is concerned, is that it has for its beliefs an infallible authority vested in pope or church or book, while rational religion must rely, as goes the phrase, on "unassisted human reason." And here again it will not be denied that the objection to rational religion, if it be an objection, and if the popular religion has such an infallible authority as it claims, is well taken.

If I am not mistaken, these are the principal particulars in which the popular supernaturalism of the time is supposed to be superior, so far as comfort is concerned, to the rising faith of rational religion. And I have allowed already that in some of these particulars there is apparently the superiority in point of comfort that is claimed—at least if we do not consider too curiously or penetrate too deeply. But were it so in all, and were the advantage not superficial but essential, this question would immediately be forced upon us: Are they true, these doctrines and ideas of the popular religion on which its claim is based? For, as I understand it, this question of truth always takes precedence of the question of comfort. The first question which we have to ask concerning any doctrine is not, Is it comforting? but, Is it true? Nor is the amount of comfort which a creed can furnish a sufficient test of truth. I know that this is not the ordinary

way of looking at these things. The ordinary way is to look first at the comfort, afterward at the truth; or, if first at the truth, the test which is brought to bear upon it to discover whether it is true or not, is whether it is comforting or not. If it is comforting, it must be true. If it is not, then it cannot be so. But the major premiss of this form of argument is one that has never been established. It is that all truth must be comfortable truth. Of course, this is not claimed for truth of fact. It is sufficiently obvious that there may be innumerable truths of fact which are very far from comforting. But when it comes to truths of principle, of doctrine, it is assumed that here the truth is always comfortable—that is to say, able to comfort. Doubtless it would be so if we could trace the curve of infinite life and thought through all its infinite sweep till it returned again upon itself. But this we cannot do. We can only trace a little section of it here and there. And so it well may be that we can sometimes see a doctrine to be true which is not comforting so far as we can see; or, again, that we can sometimes see a doctrine to be false which, so far as we can see, is very comforting indeed. In neither case have we a right to reverse our decision because of that which it implies. The comforting does not make true; the not comforting does not make false. Called upon to decide between truth and comfort, if we are really men, we shall accept the truth and cleave to that, let come what will, though seemingly it leads us forth into a way where every step is pain.

If then it were entirely true that the popular supernaturalism has at every point which I have named the advantage of rational religion, so far as comfort is concerned, the question of relative truth would not be thus determined. The popular supernaturalism might still be false for all its comforting ; the unpopular rational religion might still be true for all its lack of superficial consolations. The question, Is this popular supernaturalism true ? would still be as pertinent as ever. It is not only pertinent, but it is absolutely necessary to the comfort in it of all those who have the wit to see that they are reasoning or rather living in a vicious circle, when they take comfort in a doctrine the truth of which has been inferred from its ability to comfort them. The most are satisfied to live in such a vicious circle, but there are some who know that to be *wisely* comforted by any creed or doctrine of religion its truth must be enforced by reasons wholly independent of the comfort it may possibly afford.

But without pausing here to ask the question, Is the popular supernaturalism true in those particulars upon which its claim is based of being *the* comfortable religion ? I would call your attention to a fact which has been generally overlooked, and which only now is beginning to force itself upon the attention of the more thoughtful ; namely, that all which is most cheerful and consoling in the popular religion is a recent growth ; it has not the sanction of the Bible, of the councils, of the creeds. The Old Testament says, It is not in me, and the New Testament, It is not

in me. Paul and Jesus are equally silent about it. Augustine and Calvin say nothing about it. As Frederick Harrison says in a recent notable discussion, "It is not Christianity, but neo-Christianity. It is a fantasia with variations on the orthodox creed." This is especially true of the modern evangelical doctrine of a future life, but it is hardly less true of the modern evangelical doctrine of the human tenderness of God and of the modern evangelical doctrine of forgiveness. The fact is that these doctrines are *modern*. True or not true, they are not ancient, they are not venerable, they are not Biblical, they are not Calvinistic or Augustinian. And such being the case, any comparison between them and the doctrines of rational religion is not really a comparison between supernaturalism and rationalism. For this neo-Christianity is no more supernatural in its origin (whatever it may be in its implications) than rational religion. If it were Roman Catholic, then it might still be accounted supernatural; for the Roman Catholic holds to the idea that the Church is always supernatural, and that there may be a development of doctrine inside the Church whose latest fruits shall be as supernatural as the first fruits of Christianity in the time of Jesus and the Apostles. But while holding to this idea the Roman Catholic Church has not developed, with one exception, any of this neo-Christianity which is supposed to be so much more comforting than rational religion. Its God is no expansion of the human tenderness of Jesus. Even its Jesus has had every human trait

eliminated until he is the awful Judge of Michael Angelo's Last Judgment, and by no means the elder brother of the liberal Protestant. Roman Catholicism is not without its elements of tenderness, but they are for the most part engrossed by Mary, "the Mother of God." And even here the tenderness and consolation are almost entirely without ecclesiastical authority. They come of brooding sentiment, of fancy and imagination, acting with unlicensed freedom, as where Adelaide Procter, of all Roman Catholic singers the most tender, writing about "the children's place in heaven," says that it is "at Mary's feet," who softly sings,

- A little chant to please them, low and sweet,
Or, smiling, strokes their little angel wings ;

- Or gives them her white lilies or her beads
To play with : yet in spite of flower or song
They often lift a wistful look that pleads
And asks her why their mother stays so long.

- Then our dear Queen makes answer she will call
Her very soon ; meanwhile they are beguiled
To wait and listen while she tells them all
A story of her Jesus as a child.'

It is very pretty, is it not? It is very sweet and tender, and it must be very consoling to one who can implicitly believe it. But if it is not rationalism, it is not supernaturalism any more. There is nothing of this sort in the Bible or the creeds. The development of Roman Catholic doctrine, properly speaking, does not include it. If it is not condemned by the official censor, no

more are other sentiments which are as cruel as this is tender, as agonizing as this is consoling.

The idea of a development of doctrine has found no favor in the eyes of evangelical Protestants. These are best pleased to think that in the Bible we have the final word of God unto his children ; that since this was finished there has been no communication ; no syllable of spiritual truth has floated down from the supremest height to any listening ear. And hence it follows that if those doctrines and ideas upon which they base their claim for their religion as *the* religion of comfort are not to be found between the covers of the Bible, no supernatural authority can be claimed for them. They stand precisely on a level with the doctrines of rational religion, so far as any extrinsic authority is concerned. They may be more or less rational, and such value as they have depends entirely upon the amount of rationality which they contain.

The assumption is continually made that the popular evangelical religion differs from rational religion as *the* religion of comfort in virtue of its being a religion supernaturally inspired ; but the fact is that, as a religion of comfort, it has little or no warrant from the honored volume which contains the sum and substance of its supernatural revelation. Not but that there is really many a word of comfort in the Bible which even rational religion can adopt for its intrinsic truth and beauty into its own sacred anthology. But in nine cases out of ten it is the word only that is adopted. The meaning is our own, and is per-

haps entirely foreign to the meaning which it had at first. The subjective element enters very largely into our conceptions of the Bible. We find that which we seek. It is not half so tender in reality as it has become to its interpreters of modern date. Hundreds of sentences in psalm or prophecy are tender and comforting to us only because detached from their original connection and discharged of their original meaning. For Jehovah we read God, and for the Jews we read everybody, and so translate numberless phrases out of their special into a universal meaning. The very words which are an express denial of immortality in the Old Testament are read as if they were an affirmation : "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it." Such violence as this is seldom possible, but an approximation to such is not infrequent.

The main particulars of doctrine upon the strength of which the popular religion bases its claim to be considered *the* religion of comfort, and this with supernatural sanctions, are, as we have already seen, (1) A God of human tenderness ; (2) An immortality which is an extension of the affections and the aspirations of this world ; (3) A Providence which singles out this or that individual for special happiness or misery ; (4) A theory of prayer which makes it a device for curing our diseases without skill, and prospering our tillage without care ; for putting out fire without water, and sin without virtue ; lastly, that for

all of these beliefs and theories it has the sanction of a supernatural authority.

But is a God of human tenderness, be he or not the God of rational religion, the God of either Testament? He certainly is not the terrible Jehovah of the Old Testament, even in his most gracious manifestations, which are as different as possible from those of the Mosaic or even the Davidic times, when he was still a tribal God, liking the smell of blood, and not averse to human sacrifices upon his reeking altars. But does not the New Testament "show us the Father"? It does, indeed, though not with such an emphasis as one would think from all the stress that has been put upon it here. The Father of the New Testament, especially of John, is but infrequently the universal Father. He is the Father of the Messiah and a little coterie besides. And what support is there for all our modern orthodox enlargement on the human tenderness of God? One single sentence which never had this meaning for anybody, it may be safely said, until the present century: He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. Until recently this sentence meant to all the world that Jesus was like-natured with the Infinite God; never that the Infinite God was like-natured with the human Jesus. And whatever there may be in either Testament calculated to present the Infinite in terms of human tenderness, surely it did not avail to make such terms the common thought and speech of men, or even to impose itself upon their most enlightened teachers. Not the shut Bible, but the open

mind, has been the means of making men believe in one who is a "God of all comfort," and not a being only to be feared, but to be hated if we dared. Was there any comfort in the God of Augustine or Calvin? Well might the legal contracts even of Cromwell's time begin, "In the fear and dread of the great God." It is not revelation, but reason, that is responsible for the change in the conception. Left to themselves, a score of phrases there in the New Testament never would have brought about so great a revolution. It is not the static Scripture, but the dynamic mind, that has evolved from the Almighty fiend of Calvin the Infinite Jesus of MacDonald, Robertson, and Stopford Brooke. The God of these may still be something different from the God of rational religion. But he is far more different from the God of eighteen centuries of Christian orthodoxy. And what he is to-day he has become in virtue of the same regenerative force in the community which is producing the phenomena of rational religion. To reason, not to revelation, the modern evangelical religionist is indebted for the very God whom he invidiously compares with yours and mine; to reason, not unmixed with sentiment and fancy, but not on this account a whit more supernatural.

As with the comfortable thought of God, so with the comfortable thought of immortality. The assumption is that it is wholly Biblical, authoritative, supernatural. But is it really so? On the contrary, in the Old Testament there is not only no affirmation of immortality, but doubt

or flat denial ; and in the New Testament one of our most distinguished scholars, a conservative one at that, finds at the best one doubtful affirmation of a general immortality. Elsewhere the affirmation is of an immortality for believers only. So much for the bare fact of immortality, while as to the manner of it there is almost absolute silence, broken only by the negation of Jesus, In heaven there shall be neither marrying nor giving in marriage ; and the one fortunate affirmation, " That ye may be with me where I am." This, with a few sentences of Paul about the spiritual body and the splendid imagery of the Apocalypse, never intended to set forth the manner of the future life at all, is all we have for our instruction. Everywhere apparently the idea involved the resurrection of the body. Even the spiritual body of St. Paul's conception apparently was as substantial as his own. So understood the Church, at any rate, for eighteen hundred years. In the meantime, what comfort was there in the average thought of immortality, vacillating between the idea of a hibernation of both soul and body till the judgment-day, and the idea of a hibernation of the body only, the soul meantime a formless vapor, impatiently awaiting its reunion with its flesh of centuries ago ? Was Calvin's thought of immortality a comfortable thought : an immortality of heaven for the few elect, and of eternal misery for the innumerable reprobate ? Was it a comfortable thought even for the elect ? William E. Forster told Harriet Martineau he would rather be damned than annihilated. She thought that after

he had been damned a little while he would be of a different opinion. Better annihilated, I should say, than saved with such a small minority. Was Jonathan Edwards' thought of immortality a comfortable thought? His famous sermon, "*Sinners in the hands of an angry God,*" is still in print. Read it and see if there was any comfort in his thought for sinner or for saint. Nothing is more common than for men to talk of immortality, as if the thought of it had always been a source of comfort to mankind. But I contend that, so far as comfort is concerned, mankind would have been infinitely better off without it. Its hopes have been as nothing to its terrors. Who *were* the elect? And did election go by families, or damn and save upon a purely individual basis? It is only within very recent times that immortality has been a comfortable object of regard. And what has made it so? Surely not any revelation. Romanism claims to be a fount of never-ceasing revelation, and to this day the Romanist conception of immortality is a hideous nightmare, an insufferable curse. The more revelation, the less comfort. The less reason, the less comfort. And if the Bible revelation *were* a fount of comfortable thoughts, how does it happen that for eighteen hundred years they were not understood? The answer to the riddle is, that modern reason and imagination, and not any revelation,* are responsible for almost all the comfort that there is in modern thoughts of im-

* If any, the pretended revelation of Swedenborg a little.

mortality. Yet if the comfort proved the truth, Spiritualism would be more true than the most comfortable evangelical conception. Tennyson sings :

“For this alone on death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart :
He puts our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.”

Not so, says Spiritualism ; we *can* hear each other speak. There is no other faith so comfortable as this. And yet, although it has the suffrage of so many tender hearts and of some gifted minds, I doubt if it is true.

There is, then, no excuse for contrasting rational Christianity with modern orthodoxy, to the disadvantage of the former, and to the end that supernaturalism may be glorified, even if modern orthodoxy has a more comfortable creed concerning immortality. For, if it has, it is not in virtue of any revelation, recent or remote, but only in virtue of the same reason which has developed rational religion as its more consummate flower, coupled perhaps with somewhat less reserve of sentiment and fancy and imagination.

I shall not weaken my position by extending the line of argument, which I have so far maintained, to cover those ideas of special Providence and unspiritual prayer and supernatural authority, which, with the ideas I have already spoken of, make up the ground of accusation and self-approbation which the popular religion of the time occupies in regard to rational religion in comparison with itself. I shall not affirm that reason is

responsible for these ideas, though I might in truth affirm that reason, that the rationalistic spirit, has pruned all these ideas of an immense amount of morbid growth. They are still coarse and crude enough, but in comparison with what they were a hundred years ago, they are as Raphael's art to the old Byzantine monstrosities. Reason is not responsible for them, but hardly more is revelation. Wherever there is ignorance, wherever there is undevelopment, these ideas appear, these comfortable thoughts of special Providence, unspiritual prayer, and supernatural authority. Are they then so comfortable? The last is so, undoubtedly; but the comfort which it gives is of a quality that impeaches every man who chooses it of idleness, or cowardice, or imbecility. It is so comfortable, they say, to have a church, or book, or pope that does all your thinking for you. But what says Emerson? "God offers to every mind its choice between truth and repose. Take which you please; you can never have both. Between these as a pendulum man oscillates. He in whom the love of repose predominates will accept the first creed, the first philosophy, the first political party he meets—most likely his father's. He gets rest, commodity, and reputation; but he shuts the door of truth. He in whom the love of truth predominates will keep himself aloof from all moorings, afloat. He will abstain from dogmatism, and recognize all the opposite negations, between which, as walls, his being is swung. He submits to the inconvenience of suspense and imperfect opinion;

but he is a candidate for truth, as the other is not, and respects the highest law of his being." Supposing, then, that an infallible authority were possible It would be very comfortable. Yes ; but still a few of us could say with Lessing, " If I held truth captive in my hand, I would open my hand and let it fly, in order that I might again pursue and capture it."

Whether the popular ideas of special Providence and prayer are indeed comfortable, depends, and in no small degree, on individual character and culture. I know that multitudes get comfort out of them, but largely from their inconsistent and illogical application of them to the affairs of life. They count the answered, not the unanswered, prayers. They count the man who didn't sail upon the missing steamer or take passage on the shattered train. They do not count the company who did sail in the steamer, who did go upon the train. But that is miserable comfort which depends for all its efficacy upon our inconsistency. If all the answered prayers are counted, let the unanswered be counted as well, and see how much comfort there is left. If all happy special providences are counted, count the unhappy too. For me, while never doubting that these ideas have been the source of immense comfort to the world, I cannot doubt that they have been the source of equal or of greater misery. They have been premiums upon human imbecility. Men have sat down and whined for heavenly succor when they should have been up and doing. I do not see how many losses can be borne

when those who have to bear them feel that they are singled out by the deliberate choice of Heaven. I should curse God and die if I could find no better key than that to death and sorrow. But where I could not bow to any arbitrary will, I can, though it be hard, bow to the inexorable laws which work the good of all. Though the Lord slay me, yet will I trust in him, once I am sure he does not slay me wilfully, but because, "so help him God, He can do otherwise." Then I can take sides with him against myself. Then I can sing in spirit :

"Thy various messengers employ,
Thy purposes of love fulfil ;
And 'mid the wreck of human joy
Let kneeling faith adore thy will."

But now recurs the inevitable question : Are they *true*, these doctrines of the popular religion ? After all that reason and science have done to prune them of their baser parts, and to make them sources of comfort where they were once sources of terror to mankind, are they true, these comfortable doctrines of the popular religion ? For if they are not true, then, no matter how comfortable they are, this cannot make them any truer or any worthier of our allegiance. Then get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savorest not of the things that be of God. Of all shameful contradictions this is most shameful : to trust in God and not trust in the truth. For verily God is none other than the inmost truth of every thing that is. Comfort or truth : choose you this day which you will serve. Alas ! if we have not already chosen.

But are they not true as well as comforting, these doctrines of our modern orthodoxy, now that they have been reconstructed by the rationalistic spirit of the age? If they *are* true, and all of them, then rational religion is a superfluity. For rational religion has no comfortable assurance of an infallible supernatural authority, no comfortable belief in any sort of prayer that is a substitute for work, in any special providence which is not universal; while as for the greater doctrines—almost too great to be named with their habitual companions—of an immortality which we know all about, and a God of human tenderness expanded to the infinite, rational religion feels itself obliged to be somewhat less confident, somewhat less garrulous, somewhat less dogmatic. Of immortality it says, I hope, and hopes so greatly that its very hope becomes a prophecy. It does not dare to say, I know. I *feel* certain, it can say; but not, I *am* certain. This, too, can dream its dream of glad reunions and of visions beatific, but it does not forget that they are dreams. And it does not aver that if there be no immortality all things are rotten at the core. If there be not, it is because it is not best for there to be. If it is best, then it will surely be. If it is not, I do not care for it. Do you?

“ For if to me to live seems good,
Thy goodness conquers mine;
Or should not life, but death await,
My choice I glad resign;

“ Sure still that there is higher good,
That life is not my gain,
That what I think is happiness
Thou knowest would be pain.”

What does it say of God? That sure of him as it can be of nothing else, sure of his infinite wisdom and beneficence, the tenderest aspects of our popular theology are yet somewhat too anthropomorphic for reason or reverence to assent to them without reserve. Symbolically true, they are not true in any literal sense. God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways. The more we think, the more are we convinced of this; but also of the rest of this great Bible utterance: As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts *higher* than our thoughts, and his ways than our ways. And if there be not comfort in this great assurance it is only because comfort is too small and cheap a word for that which might well be called the peace of God that passeth understanding.

If rational religion does not challenge a comparison with the most rational orthodoxy of the time which is still supernatural, upon the head of "Comfort in Religion," it is not because it owns itself inferior. Whatever comforts it may miss, it has its own, and they are very deep and high. There are no better to be had. They are, that life is ever getting to be better worth the having; that ignorance, and cruelty, and injustice, and oppression are being driven more and more into the corners of the world; that, whatever the divine attributes, the divine laws are comprehensible, and whether immanent in matter or in spirit are always wonderful and sweet and good, can always be depended on to do what they have always done. They are, again, the consciousness

that, spite of many aberrations, mankind has been advancing slowly but surely, from the remotest past, and will continue its advance to the remotest future ; that every good thought or word or action, in however dark a corner of the world, helps to bring in the kingdom of the best ; that God is ever greater than our greatest thought and better than our tenderest dream ; that what belongs to us will come unto its own ; that what is best for us we shall not be denied.

There is a rational religionist in Concord, Massachusetts, who does not dogmatize with any of the sects, even the most liberal, and who, by the majority of their canons, ought to be one of the most miserable of men. But somehow he is not. He is one of the best contented, one of the happiest of men. I met him this last summer in the crowded Boston streets, and his face was lighted up with an unspeakable serenity and joy. I doubt if there is any happier man in any of the churches, even the most genial of the orthodox. He has lived long and well. To thousands he has been a counsellor, a guide, a friend, an inspiration. I cannot tell what he has been to me. A little parable of his sums up as well as any thing I know the case for rational religion in regard to all that I have tried to say this morning. This is the parable :

Every day brings a ship ;
Every ship brings a word ;
Well for them who have no fear
Looking seaward well assured
That the word the vessel brings
Is the word they wish to hear !

RATIONAL SACRAMENTS.

THE idea of sacrament has always played an important part in the institutions of religion. It has been the idea of doing something necessary to establish a right relation, a relation of peace and amity, between the worshipper and the deity or deities to whom his worship was directed. But furthermore, this something has always, heretofore, been something formal, something between which and the object sought there was no natural or obvious relation, no relation of cause and effect. The idea of a sacrament has included the idea of something magical : the effect entirely disproportioned to the cause, as that by sprinkling water on the forehead of a child, should the child die the next moment, its eternal happiness would be secured. The sacrament is not esteemed the cause but the occasion of the good which it entails. A supernatural power, it is supposed, has arbitrarily affixed to such and such formalities such and such pieces of good fortune. It is most likely that if we could go back far enough we should find that the sacrament in its initial stage was seldom if ever arbitrary. The

thing done was supposed to have some natural and causative relation to the end supposed to be accomplished. Take, for example, the most characteristic sacrament of the Jewish religion. For centuries it has been purely arbitrary in its nature ; practised wholly without reason ; the sanitary grounds on which modern Jewish rationalism has sought to justify it being wholly insufficient and absurd. But in its origin it was undoubtedly an ascending step from the custom of human sacrifice : the sacrifice of a part for the whole, as when the American Indian places his hand upon a buffalo's skull and has one or more joints chopped off—a sanguinary offering to his god. Another Jewish sacrament, the dedication of the first-born, was an undoubted reminiscence of the time when every first-born child was actually sacrificed to an imaginary deity. A third sacrament, the sacrifice of animals, was a survival of the custom of offering food to the ancestral ghosts, who were apparently men's earliest gods. And so I doubt not that if we knew the history of the past from the remotest times, we should find that every sacrament was originally supposed to have an actual and causative relation to a certain end. This relation was no doubt purely imaginary, but as yet the sacrament was not an arbitrary symbol. It became this in course of time, as the original significance of it was gradually obscured and lost. Then either some fiction was invented to account for it, or men began to glory in its arbitrary character as a token of its supernatural warrant.

In different branches of the Christian Church the sacramental theory and practice have had different degrees of prominence, and it may safely be affirmed that the measure of this prominence has also been the measure of their spiritual life and moral influence. The more prominent the sacramental idea, the less prominent the moral. The more sacramental the religion, the more unspiritual. This is not always so in individual cases. The sacramental theory and practice are not the only enemies of spiritual life. In individual cases dogmatism is sometimes quite as anti-spiritual as formalism. And so, too, is emotionism, when, as too often happens, it is a mere lasciviousness of mind; "profligacy of the religious sentiment," said Theodore Parker, "voluptuousness with God." And the transition from such lasciviousness of mind, such profligacy of the religious sentiment, to corresponding bodily indulgences has always been an easy one. But taking men in masses, the proposition can be easily defended that in proportion as Christianity has been sacramental it has been unspiritual, unmoral. The Roman Church is somewhat more sacramental and less moral than the Church of England. The Russian Church is somewhat more sacramental and a good deal less moral than the Roman Church, while other branches of the Eastern Church, such as the Armenian, the Coptic, and the Abyssinian, are still more sacramental than the Russian, and still less moral. Very likely the difference of morality is not wholly the result of the different degrees of sacramental observance, but making due

allowance for all other influences, this is evidently the most important.

The Roman Catholic Church has seven different sacraments. They are the mass, or eucharist, baptism, confirmation, penance, holy orders, marriage, and extreme unction. Of these, Protestantism, with the exception of the Episcopalian branch, and inconsiderable exceptions here and there, such as the feet-washing of the Dunkers, has retained only two, baptism and the eucharist. Of the second of these, moreover, it has entirely changed the theory and character. In the Roman Catholic Church the wafer that is eaten is the literal body of Christ, and not bread at all. Luther contended that it was at the same time bread and Christ's body—consubstantiation ; but Zwingli and Calvin would not allow so much as this. It is bread, and bread only, said they. And the sacrament is not a sacrifice, as the Roman Catholics contend. It is the symbol of a sacrifice. The views of Calvin and Zwingli have been generally adopted in the Protestant world.

The chapter which records the fortunes of these various sacraments is one of the saddest chapters in the history of religion. It is a record of angry debates, of senseless quibbles, of miserable makeshifts, of hateful persecutions, and of pitiful quarrels between men who should have stood shoulder to shoulder in the press of right against the wrong. The darkest blot upon the fame of Luther is his cruel enmity with Zwingli, because the Swiss Reformer could not accept his fine-spun theory of consubstantiation ; could not believe that the eucharistic bread was any thing

but bread. Consider, too, the controversies that have raged concerning the right form of baptism—controversies that have become wars and cost the lives of thousands. Even within the limits of the present century we have had a party in the English Church contending for the idea of baptismal regeneration ; that is, for some magical influence of baptism by which the subject is converted from a candidate for hell into a child of heaven.

Shall rational religion cut itself wholly free from all these sacraments ? Not necessarily because they have been the occasion of so much misery and ruin in the world. Many a good thing has had to fight its way to recognition and acceptance. But if the sacramental observances of the past are going to be incorporated in the *cult* of rational religion, they must be able to justify themselves on rational grounds. And it does not follow that they are unable to do this because ordinarily the reasons given for their existence and continuance are no reasons at all, or because their origin was manifestly irrational and trivial. For we have many social observances and institutions, which had a manifestly irrational or trivial origin, which have still a right to exist in virtue of their actual usefulness. They answer to some real want in the community. Now is it so with any of the sacraments of Roman Catholic or Protestant Christianity ? The grounds on which they nominally rest are such as cannot for a moment commend them to our rational judgment. For the most of them it is possible to find one or two iso-

lated texts in the New Testament, which are supposed to be their supernatural warrant. For some of them there is not even this. But upon close examination it turns out that these texts are by no means able to carry any such weight of meaning as has been forced upon them. Baptism was evidently common in the early church, and the form of it was evidently such as would entirely justify our Baptist friends in their position, if the only question were one of ancient custom and of Biblical authority. But there is nothing in the text relating to baptism that justifies any such stress as has been laid upon it. There is no hint that baptism is essential to salvation ; no hint of baptismal regeneration. Consider next the mass, the eucharist, the Lord's Supper. Not only do the words of Jesus, "This is my body," not afford any ground for such a monstrous doctrine as that of transubstantiation, any more than when he said, "I am the door," he meant he was a literal door, but there is no evidence that he intended to institute any rite whatever. Little imagining that his followers would ever cease to be Jewish formalists, he begged of them as often as they gathered to the yearly Paschal feast, and ate of its unleavened bread, and drank its wine, to think of him, their teacher. So far as the New Testament is concerned there is a hundred times as much warrant for the rite of feet-washing as for the Lord's Supper. Compare the passages when you get home, and see if I am wrong. The New Testament texts quoted in favor of penance, confirmation, and extreme unction are of even less validity than those

concerning baptism and the supper. Nothing is surer than that these texts were not the reasons, but only the excuses of the Church for establishing these sacraments. If they had been the reasons, it would not have taken the Church six, seven, and eight hundred years and more to discover them. But this it did. The real origin of penance was in the necessity or disposition of the Church to increase her revenues. Extreme unction was a concession to the converts of the North, anxious to still retain their charms and amulets. But for the need of this concession the text in James 5 : 14 would have been left quite undisturbed and harmless till the present time.

But even if the scriptural warrant for these various observances were as complete as it is otherwise, their warrant for the rational religionist would still be inappreciable, seeing that the writings which contain these texts are for the most part anonymous, and when not so have no authority for us other than that involved in their intrinsic rationality. It has been commonly assumed, along the course of Christian history, that, once convinced that any theory or practice was the theory and practice of the early Christians, we should at once adopt it without further question. Every form of church government has appealed to the New Testament in favor of its claim. The Unitarian of fifty years ago thought he had effectually silenced the Episcopalian when he had demonstrated that the Apostolic Church was not Episcopalian. But to the rational religionist nothing is settled by such an argument as this, except as the Epis-
cop-

lian rests his claim entirely on the Bible. That such or such doctrine was taught in the Apostolic Church, such or such form observed, such or such church government instituted, is to the rational religionist rather a presumption against the validity of such a doctrine, form, or institution at the present time. It stands to reason that what was well and good in Palestine eighteen centuries ago cannot be well and good now in Europe and America, where all the conditions of life are so entirely different. I do not believe in the Roman Catholic, or Episcopalian, or Presbyterian forms of church government, but it is not because I do not find a warrant for them in the usage of the primitive Church. It is because they seem to me unsuited to the needs and aspirations of the present time.

If, then, the various sacraments of Christianity have no sufficient Bible warrant, and if such warrant, how complete soever, would not constitute a rational ground for their observance, is there any such ground? I shall not waste your time, nor question your intelligence, by going over the whole list with you and giving each a full consideration. Penance—you know the part that this has played in Christian history; in theory it has not discharged the sinner of his debt to God and man, but only to the Church. In practice it has been very different, and what weakening of the moral sense has been the consequence! Extreme unction—that is an absolutely groundless superstition, and not the least improvement on the charms and amulets which it displaced; as superstitious as

they were, and as hopelessly absurd. The sacrament of ordination has ever been a premium upon immorality and imbecility in the priestly office, affirming, as it does, that in the office, not in the man, abides the virtue of the priest, and that no spiritual disease of the man can prejudice the functions of his office. The sacrament of marriage, as understood by Romanism, has ever tempted men to look away from those things which do really constitute the sacredness of marriage, and to consider this sacredness wholly a matter of ecclesiastical formality. Confirmation—that youth and maid should dedicate themselves to generous ideals is certainly desirable, but hardly that they should do it publicly. Father or mother, sister or dearest friend, might, it appears to me, more fitly and more solemnly than any priest receive the vow, if it is necessary that it should be spoken. The most appalling commentary that I know upon this sacrament, as it exists in Europe in our day, is that in Germany a harlot cannot procure a license to pursue her fearful trade unless she can first show to the authorities a certificate of confirmation !

It remains to speak of the Lord's Supper and of baptism, the only sacraments which Protestantism, pure and simple, has in common with the Roman Catholic church. From first to last the former has received a hundred different interpretations, and taken on a hundred different forms. In the early Church it was a genuine feast, from which substantial food was taken home to those who could not come by those who could. Twen-

ty-five years after the death of Jesus it had degenerated at Corinth into a drunken bout. So far the bread and wine had not been symbols, but they in time became so, and then little by little, through eight hundred years, grew up the Roman Catholic doctrine of the mass, that awful mystery wherein the priest creates, then sacrifices God—by eating Him ! The Protestant development has been in quite the opposite direction ; its first step to restore the cup to the laity ; next to deny the transubstantiation ; next to deny the consubstantiation ; Calvin and Zwingli both did this ; but Zwingli's thought was simpler still than Calvin's ; for Calvin there was still something magical about it ; for Zwingli it was a simple service of commemoration. This it has tended more and more to become in Protestant circles. But if the Roman methods tended more to superstition than the Protestant, the Protestant methods have tended more to self-righteousness than the Roman. "I am holier than thou," has ever, with a few extremely modern and painfully inconsiderable exceptions, been the meaning of participation in this rite. Of late the walls are getting broken ; those who *desire* to love and follow the Great Teacher are being welcomed to the feast. In certain quarters, too, the symbols are getting to be considered hindrances instead of helps. Dr. Furness, at the end of fifty years' experience, arrived at this conclusion, and left the elements untouched upon the table. But having gone so far, why not dispense with them entirely ? This also has been done in various places.

Shall rational religion, now that the sacrament has become so different from its original intention, so different, too, from its most complete development in the sacrifice of the mass, adopt it in its latest and most simple form? There is something to be said for such a course. That Jesus did not say to *us*, "Do this in remembrance of me"; that these words were addressed to his immediate disciples, and to "do this" meant to eat the Paschal bread and drink the Paschal wine—these are no arguments against a simple periodic meeting to commemorate the holy life and martyr death of one who, under God, did more for us than any other of the sons of men. At such a meeting how natural it would be to blend with thoughts of him the thoughts of others who are gone. But if it would be good to keep so much of the long-waning rite, to refrain even from so much would, it appears to me, be better still. For when the rite has been denuded, little by little, of all its characteristic drapery of form and meaning, it does not differ sufficiently from other natural services of religious worship to retain a special place. There are seasons of the year at which the memory of Jesus naturally demands a special prominence, and we grant it willingly. There is no time of year at which it is not appropriate to tenderly remember all the gracious beauty of his life. We need not fear that he will be forgotten. Much more reason have we to fear that any formal and periodical service of commemoration would soon become barren to us and cold. Occasions do not always create appropriate moods. But moods can

always find appropriate occasions. While, then, the rational religionist will have no word of blame or scorn for those who still retain this rite, cleansed of all superstition and of all self-righteousness, of all its symbols too, he will feel that for himself it is best to spare even so much of that which would be in constant danger of becoming more or less.

The sacrament of baptism remains to be considered. If there is any Christian sacrament which in its very origin was a pure symbol, it is surely this. The various washings and cleansing of the Jewish ritual were not symbolical. They rested on the assumption that physical impurity was a bar to man's acceptance with Jehovah. Baptism would seem to have been invented by John the Baptist, as a symbol of repentance and inward purification. In such a climate and amidst such social conditions no better could have been invented. But in colder climates the rite in its original form, which was immersion, has been less natural. Christianity made no progress in Iceland until it was conceded that the converts should be baptized in warm water, then the new faith went like a rushing wind. We can all see that baptism in the Jordan is one thing, and baptism in a tank, in water previously warmed — "biled Jordan," Father Taylor called it—is quite another. These incongruities and difficulties have set men to work to torture and wrench the Scriptures into a confession favorable to infant baptism, and the sprinkling of the forehead instead of the immersion of the whole body. So practised the rite is still very

natural and beautiful, water is such a natural symbol of purity, but it is not baptism. It has not the form nor yet the meaning of the original sacrament.

From such premises what conclusion will the rational religionist naturally draw? Will he restore the ancient symbol? He will not do this: in the first place because it is conditioned by local and climatic circumstances, failing of which the rite becomes impossible, if not ridiculous; and, in the second place, because the dedication of one's self to ideal holiness is a matter too solemn and private to be signalized by any outward act. Baptism originally implied a vow on the part of the person baptized to live a life of purity and truth. In infant baptism it is the parents who make the vow. They dedicate the child to goodness, truth, and love. They pledge themselves to rear him in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. And this I cannot but think is very fit and beautiful. As when two loving spirits are made man and wife, I would not have the mayor or the village justice join their hands, but would have the minister of religion there to impress upon them the wonderful significance, the awful sacredness of the marriage bond; so when a little child is born into the world I would always have a sweet and solemn celebration in the home—a service of thanksgiving for the danger that is passed and for the hopes that cluster round the feeble, helpless thing which nestles in its mother's arms. Shall a few drops of water on the infant's forehead be symbol of the purity in which you hope and

pledge yourselves to keep the growing life? I think it would be better to dispense with this, so trivial it seems compared with that you fain would symbolize. Where, then, is the baptismal sacrament? Why, vanished utterly; but in its place we have a little feast of dedication and thanksgiving.

But shall rational religion have no other sacraments than these of birth and marriage, which incidently I have already named? Rather it has so many, and they are so great and wonderful that it would choose not to have these outward festivals of birth and marriage regarded as its sacraments at all, fit as they are, and right and beautiful. The theory of the Roman Catholic sacraments for a long time has been that they cover, in their entirety, the life of man from its beginning to its close; they are, in turn, appropriate to every period of his experience. Thus baptism is appropriate to life's beginning, confirmation to self-conscious youth, the sacrament of marriage to the time for marriage, the mass to every exigency of the fleeting years, and extreme unction to the parting of the ways. For its own sacraments rational religion is prepared to make a similar claim. It has its sacraments appropriate to every time of life. Yea, more, its sacraments are themselves the events, the stages, the experiences of life, which Romanism signalizes with baptism and confirmation and so on. It also has its festivals and solemn meetings appropriate to these various events and stages of existence; its festival of gladness when a new life has come "out of the everywhere

into here ;" its festival of solemn hopes and earnest purpose as often as two streams of life flow into one to part again no more ; its quiet gathering about the dead, to speak their simple praise, and to get strength and courage from the contemplation of the inviolable sanctities of the eternal law. But these are not the sacraments of rational religion. Natural and vital as these are, its real sacraments are still more natural and vital. We can conceive that without these life might still be endurable and sweet and sane. But without its real sacraments this were impossible. Without these, life would be unendurable, a hateful and abominable thing.

I have said that rational religion has sacraments appropriate to every time of life. And this is but another form of saying that it perceives the natural sacredness of every time of life ; of all its great events, of all its necessary relationships and duties and calamities. Birth, then, is the first in order of the natural sacraments of rational religion. The Roman Catholic considers mystery essential to a sacrament. He will not deny that birth has at any rate this characteristic of a true sacrament. It has abundant mystery. When we have read all that the Daltons and Drapers and Carpenters can tell us about it, we stand, *with them*, as much in awe of it as ever. We have not found out the Almighty to perfection. The more we have searched the more we have wondered. Strange, was it, that the wise men knelt in wonder and amazement before the infant Jesus ? Is it not rather strange that wise men do not always kneel

in wonder and amazement before this “bright appearance of the Lord,” this manifestation of the invisible God? Oh, marvellous that men should go back eighteen hundred years, and to far-off Judea, in search of miracles, when ever and anon this miracle of miracles, which still is not the violation but the illustration of the everlasting laws, is blossoming in their own homes!

Birth is a sacrament; an unspeakably beautiful and sacred and mysterious and solemn thing; but we become partakers of this sacrament only as we perceive its real meaning. In how many homes does God ordain this sacrament; and the dull eyes of men and women fail to catch one glimpse of its transcendent glory and beatitude! For if they did not, how could so many speak as they do speak of this great mystery in careless and irreverent phrase; how should they not, in every woman upon whom has dawned the holy hope of motherhood, see, as it were, the visible shrine of the invisible, and bless her in their hearts? Birth is a sacrament, and those who know it to be such will know what a sublime and awful thing it is to make themselves partakers with the infinite; to summon from unconscious deeps of being a conscious soul, and how tenderly and holily they ought to walk before the Highest when once the boon which they have dared to pray for has been granted them. Birth is a sacrament; a sacrament of joy, as all the household gathers from day to day with worshipful regards about the new madonna and the holy child; a sacrament of tenderness; that tiny hand imposes upon all who come into the sphere of in-

fancy so plain a law of gentleness and peace ; a sacrament of hope and consecration, as, for the sake of that wee morsel of humanity, father and mother and the other children sanctify themselves afresh to mutual service and to more spiritual ideals. You have all read, I trust, that wonderful story of “The Luck of Roaring Camp.” That is a story of how birth can be a sacrament of pity and devotion to the most brutal of mankind.

There comes a time when the management of a child’s life, which has been in the hands of others, passes into his own entirely, or to a large degree. Parental care can still determine to a considerable extent the outward form of life ; but the child’s inner life is henceforth, for the most part, to be freely chosen. Good and evil, industry and idleness, truth and falsehood, purity and shame, solicit him upon the right hand and the left ; he must make his choice between them. Whether to stand “upon the threshold of life’s awful temple with easy smile, without uncovered head or bended knee or breathless listening,” or as one hearkening for every highest word of warning and command, this is the problem of the time for which the Church provides her sacrament of confirmation. But is not all the period of youth, or ought it not to be, a sacrament of confirmation ? I have seen the sacrament of confirmation as it is practised in the churches, and very solemn and beautiful it would have been if the priest had not rattled through the service as if he were racing against time. But infinitely more solemn and beautiful is the natural sacrament of confirmation, which ra-

tional religion seeks not to compress into any single hour of purer exaltation, but seeks to make the habit of the youth's enlarging and unfolding life. No hands episcopal imposed on the bowed head, no mumbled formula, can complete the sacrament of rational religion. But there must go to its completion hundreds of silent hours wherein the powers of good and evil contend for mastery in the youthful soul. There must go to its completion combats innumerable with besetting faults of temper, taste, and disposition ; struggles with selfishness, with pride, with self-conceit, and with debasing appetites. Only when all of this, and more, is bravely overpassed has youth achieved its confirmation ; for then, and not till then, is it confirmed in truth and purity and helpfulness.

Surely the Roman Catholic does not mistake in saying marriage should be regarded as a sacrament. It should indeed, and in some far more serious and solemn meaning of the word than Romanism ever has attached to it in this connection. For Romanism has affirmed, through fifteen centuries, that marriage is at best a necessary evil, necessary to human baseness, necessary to keep up the breed of saints as well as that of sinners. But it is not the ideal state of men and women. The married life is not the most sacred life that they can lead. The monastery and the nunnery are more sacred than the home. Celibacy is the ideal state. Marriage is a concession to the grossly passionate. In the face of such a theory it ill becomes the Roman Church to pride itself on having made marriage a sacrament. It has made

it a shame and a disgrace, and, for the contumely it has heaped upon it, it is a wholly insufficient compensation that it has denied the binding force of civil marriage. Better be married by the village hog-reeve and believe that there is no estate more pure and holy than that of marriage, than be married by the Pope of Rome, while tacitly acknowledging that of two opposing courses you are choosing that which is the baser.

Marriage is always a possible sacrament, but what makes it an actual one is the interpretation put upon it by the consenting parties ; this and not any matter of ecclesiastical rather than civil function at the moment of consent. Let who will officiate—priest, minister, or civil officer—marriage is not a sacrament if it is any matter of convenience, any escape from passion's freer range. And whatever the original intention, though it be the purest possible, it is not this that makes the marriage sacramental. No, but the love and patience and fidelity of all the years of its continuance ; the bearing and forbearing ; the common yearning after things good and true and beautiful ; the demand of each from the other of absolute justice ; the giving each to the other of perfect confidence ; the rearing of your children less with a view to your own pleasure than with a view to their advantage, consulting less your fancy than their individuality in determining their education and their choice of a career.

The sacraments of Romanism are all, with two exceptions, penance and the mass, sacraments that do not recur. Baptism, confirmation, holy orders,

extreme unction—all of these are over and done with in a few moments. But penance and the mass, it claims, are sacraments that last from confirmation until death, although the faithful are not now encouraged to avail themselves of penance very frequently. The sacraments of rational religion are sacraments that do not exhaust themselves in a few moments ; they are a matter of weeks and months and years. Nor have they all the special appropriateness of those I have already named to definite periods of life. Work is the one great sacrament of rational religion. Be it head-work or hand-work, is it not altogether sacred and divine ? Yes, when the worker feels himself to be a part of all the labor everywhere by which the world maintains its steady poise. The teaching of the Church has been that its own rites and services are a more sacred matter than men's daily work, the church building a more sacred edifice than their workshops or their homes. But once you know that labor is a sacrament, be it the labor of the father at his bench or the mother in her kitchen or at her cradle-side ; be it the labor of singers with their voices, or of scholars with their brains, from that moment you know that the work-shop, the study, the counting-room, the kitchen, is more sacred than any church, though it were Notre Dame or Strasbourg, or Cologne or Milan's miracle of countless spires. Time was when it was a much greater offence to strike a man down in a church than at his bench or oar, and punishable with much severer penalties ; but in the theory of rational religion it is a much

greater offence to strike a man down at his work than anywhere else. This is of all things the most sacred. If any of you come here with the idea that this building, with its services, is more sacred than your offices, your workshops, and your homes, I tell you it is not. For what, then, does the Church exist? To press home upon men's hearts the knowledge and conviction that their homes are the most sacred temples; their work, so that it be done as well as they can do it, is their one most solemn sacrament.

But work, at least such work as is immediately directed to the maintenance of life, its comforts and necessities, is not the only sacrament of rational religion that recurs with gracious frequency. Thought is a sacrament; a thing so sacred that in comparison with it all of the former sacraments of the churches dwindle into utter insignificance. "Give me a thought," said Richter, "that I may refresh myself." This is mysterious enough to suit the Romanist. In virtue of it I can sit a happy guest at the symposiums of Plato and Plutarch. Who that has known its overmastering charm would dare insult it by comparison with any sacrament of Protestant or Romanist? And beauty is a sacrament. I think that Schlegel did not write amiss, "There is no more potent antidote to sensuality than the adoration of the beautiful." Whatever be the object of our adoration, the firm-set mountains or the mobile sea, the splendor of the sunset, or the stars that come when that is gone, the music of the great composers, the poet's song, the paint-

er's picture, the entrancing splendor and illusion of dramatic art—these are sacramental to the man whose eye is fixed on beauty and on that alone ; ay, and a thousand times more sacred and inspiring than many a preacher's word or priest's most solemn ritual.

As the Romanist, so the rationalist, has his sacrament of death. But it is no magic of extreme unction, and hardly more is it the words of gratitude and consolation that are spoken over the silent form which can respond no more to our caresses. Death is itself the sacrament, the unspeakably wonderful and solemn and mysterious thing. It is a sacrament of memory and hope ; a sacrament in which there is a real transubstantiation : our actual friend, becoming an ideal presence in our lives, and legislating for us many a law of meekness and forbearance. Our jealousies and animosities—they cannot breathe in that pure atmosphere where we commingle with our dead. Life is too short for such things, we discover, and stretch out alienated hands above the silent form, so potent though so motionless.

So many words, and what do they amount to after all ? Simply to this, that, to the rational religionist, Life is the sacrament of sacraments ; the sacred thing inclusive of all others—birth, youth, and love, and work and beauty, thought and death, all these, and much beside that must remain unnamed. Life is the one great sacrament ; the one great solemn, beautiful, and sacred thing. Only it is no sacrament for us save as we know its meaning ; save as we understand its laws and

give to them a swift and glad obedience. Be this the goal of our endeavor, and then, be sure, we shall not greatly miss the formal sacraments of any church, nor fail, if, as we hope and trust, there is a larger life beyond, to enter on it well equipped for every task it can provide, and well prepared for every joy it can bestow.

THE ART OF LIFE.

THE arts of life are many, but the Art of Life is one. One made up of many, certainly, but still one. We divide the arts of life into fine and useful. The useful arts again are many. The fine arts are comparatively few. As commonly enumerated, they are Painting, Sculpture, Music, Architecture, Poetry, and Eloquence. But this enumeration is not a complete one. We are obliged to add the fictile and the textile arts, and the various arts of household decoration. These can not be excluded from the list of fine arts because they are all superinduced upon a ground of use. For this test would exclude architecture also. This, as well as eloquence, has been called a mixed art, because sometimes its end is principally use, at others principally beauty. The same is true of the fictile and the textile arts, and of what is now called household art. But no art we now call fine, however exclusively so, was a fine art in its initial stage. All had their origin in use. The first poetry was a mere device for memorizing the names and feats of ancestors. The first sculpture

was a strictly useful art—that is, not an end in itself, but a means of honoring one's ancestors or the gods. Did the sentiment of beauty have any thing to do with the making of all those innumerable statues that you see over in the Cesnola collection at the Metropolitan Museum in New York? Nay, rather the sentiment of filial piety. If beauty was intended, both mind and hand refused to second the intention. So again use, and not beauty, religious use, was the parent of the twin arts of music and dancing. This makes it the more strange that our Quaker friends should object to music, and our Calvinistic friends to dancing. The first architect was the first man who bent the boughs of several trees together to make a sort of tent; and even the first temples were built, not for the sake of beauty, but to house the statues of the gods. Use indeed is the secret of all civilization. Think you the sciences originated in any love of science, knowledge, as such? No more than the arts originated in the love of beauty. "How to fix the religious festivals; when to sow; how to weigh commodities in what manner to measure ground—were the purely practical questions out of which grew the sciences of astronomy, mechanics, geometry." * Ye that love art and science, and despise use, know that without the spur of use there would have been no art, no science, in the world. From that plain-featured mother have been born all of these beautiful and godlike arts and sciences.

The distinction between useful and fine arts is

* Spencer: "Illustrations of Universal Progress," p. 188.

sometimes more of a distinction than a difference. Not only architecture and eloquence and pottery and weaving are mixed arts, but many others. Painting also has its uses, and so too has music, as when the band strikes up upon the weary march or nerves men's hearts upon the edge of battle. But the line of division tends to obliteration, not only from the fine-art side, but also from the side of use. The useful arts are fine just in proportion to the desire they manifest to combine beauty with use. There is something truly pathetic in the first hint of this desire in the most ancient pottery : a mere scratch in the wet clay was the beginning of all the art of Böttcher and Palissy and Wedgwood and Minton. Next came a little line of color. The beginning of every one of the fine arts was just as weak as this. The artist-spirit is the spirit which desires and seeks beauty or excellence for its own sake. Now, among persons engaged in arts strictly useful there are thousands animated by this spirit. The girl at school, who is not merely content to do her problem, but must have the figures neat and handsome ; the boy, who, construing his Virgil, is not content with the first word he hits upon, but balances and chooses till the translation makes a certain music to his ear ; the housewife, who changes the position of a chair or table to better please her eye ; the mechanic, who, for the same reason, without any hope of adding to his gains, gives here or there another line or chisel-stroke ; the printer's boy, whose dawning sense of harmony and fitness compels him more than all the

foreman's oversight—all these, and every workman, young or old, who puts a thought of grace, of symmetry, of balance, of proportion, into what he does, just to the extent that he does this, works in the artist-spirit and becomes a member of the great fraternity of artists, at the head of which stand Homer and Shakspere, Raphael and Beethoven.

But while upon the one hand there are men who ply the useful arts in the artist-spirit, there are men who ply the fine arts in a spirit quite or wholly opposite. Then, and only then, when a man is so in love with his work that he can not bear not to do it as well as possible, even though he may be in pain or may be badly paid for it, or not paid at all, or knows that he will get no praise for it—then, and only then, does a man work in an artistic spirit. And because we know that there are painters and poets and musicians and sculptors and architects who care a great deal more for money, or for praise, or for applause, than they do for the beauty of their work and their honest self-satisfaction in having done their best, we know that there are people in all these walks of life who are not artists in their souls. I do not judge them harshly. If they were all alone in the world perhaps I might. But they have parents and sisters, wives and children to look out for ; husbands and brothers, too, and they are compelled to choose between art and love, and it is no wonder and no shame that love is generally victorious. But let it be understood that from the moment that, for any reason whatsoever, a man

who calls himself an artist swerves from his ideal to please the taste or win the gold or the applause of others, to the extent that he does this he ceases to be an artist, and, tried by artist-standards, is inferior to any humblest laborer who can not bear to do his work in any way below his utmost possibility.

This sermon is a plea for the artistic spirit, not merely in those arts called fine, or those called useful, nor in both of these together, but in the general management of our human life. I have no word to say against the growing passion for things beautiful, which is perhaps the most striking characteristic of our civilization at the present time. Nobody can rejoice in this passion any more than I do myself, in what has come of it already, in what is likely to come in the future. One of these days I expect there will be in America a great art of painting, a great art of building, a great art of music, and great arts of pottery and weaving ; and I wish that I might live to see the day. I rejoice in every token of its coming : that in the average country farmhouse of to-day there is more real love of beauty than there was in the average city mansion five-and-twenty years ago. There is morality in this as well as beauty. As our homes become less barren they become more attractive, and our children love better to stay at home with us. Warmth and color are no longer monopolized by the gin-shop and the gambling-hell. It is evident that our Centennial gave a very powerful impulse to the love of beautiful objects everywhere

throughout the United States, and I do not regret it. We can not have too many beautiful pictures, too many beautiful statues, too much beautiful music, too many beautiful houses. Nothing is too good for a man. "The best is good enough for him," as we say, but none too good. Only let him be a man, and there can be no house too beautiful to house him, no chair too fine for him to sit in, no picture too beautiful to adorn his walls, no music too beautiful for him to listen to. Welcome the flood of beauty that is making in like a new glacier flood o'er all the continent! May no Mrs. Partington contest its progress with her broom, but may it be welcome everywhere; come in at kitchen as at parlor doors, and bathe our dress and manners in its waves, ay, drench our life in every part with its resistless flood—if all of this may be, and nothing of manliness, nothing of conscience, nothing of courage, nothing of purity be drowned in such a tide.

Why hint at any such unlovely possibility? Why but because those times in human history when the fine arts have flourished most abundantly have not somehow been most favorable to the art of life. Witness the Elizabethan period in England, the time of Rembrandt in Holland, of Raphael in Italy, of Pericles in Athens. The art was glorious; the life was reckless, gross, and sensual. Why it was so I do not clearly see. It was so, and that is sufficient to put us on our guard. We would not purchase such an art-era as that of Raphael or Shakspere at such a price. Better the old Puritan simplicity. Better the

old meagreness and barrenness. Better the pictureless walls, the family portraits, the statueless streets, the psalmody for music, and Pollok's "Course of Time" for poetry—better all this, and worse, if possible, than an art-development ever so magnificent, flourishing at the expense of virtue, at the expense of purity and honor. Boughton's *Return of the Mayflower* is a very dreary picture, beautiful as it is, compared with Hans Makart's *Venice paying Homage to Caterina Cornaro*; but the fact that Boughton's picture stands for is the greater fact, the more wholesome fact, the fact that we would choose, I hope, if it was necessary to make a choice between them.

I think we need not go so far away as Venice, or Athens in the time of Pericles, or England in the time of Shakspere, to be taught that *life as a fine art* is not always taught in the schools of painting and sculpture, that the love of beauty may co-exist with a good deal of personal deformity. We have only to look about us in society to see that the development of taste is frequently associated with a loss of moral stamina. *Dilettantism* is the word which indicates most clearly the malady which is epidemic in æsthetic circles. The symptoms of this malady are easy to distinguish. They are a tendency to isolation and seclusion, indifference to political affairs, an occasional sigh for "a strong government," a frequent sneer at all religion, together with a languid admiration for ecclesiastical performances, a general lack of earnestness, of hope, and faith. What this man wants is to be comfortably housed and

elegantly clothed, to have plenty of paintings and etchings and bric-à-brac about him, and to keep himself as oblivious as possible of the wretchedness and squalor of the multitudes that breed and fester in the slums of our great cities. He would see nothing that is unsightly, scent nothing unsweet, experience nothing unpleasant. He has no vices ; he commits no crimes ; he may be the best of husbands, the most indulgent father. But he is selfish through and through. He cares only for the little circle of his immediate relatives and friends. He would forget if possible that there are other people in the world. He is not exceptional. He is a sample of a class —a class which is increasing rapidly. And if I thought that the tendency which he illustrates was inevitable, if I thought that taste, the love of beauty, always had this narrowing and belittling influence, that dilettantism was its inevitable conclusion, that it took the moral stamina out of a man, and made him dainty and all that—then I should want to burn all the beautiful pictures in the United States of America (a good many would be safe enough), and break all the beautiful wares and all the beautiful furniture, if haply, doing so, I might bring back the days when life was a fine art—a finer than the finest that we call fine in our ordinary speech ; not dilettantish, not afraid of contact with the world, but loving to be out and wrestling with its salt and sinewy tides. Welcome the new love of beauty if it may consist with this ! But otherwise, “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

And, thank heaven, it may consist with it. To prove the possibility, a single instance is as good as fifty or a hundred. I know a man whose nature is as sensitive to every form of beauty as the prepared plate of the photographer to the action of the light. Never was man more tremulous at her approach, or more impressional beneath her touch. There is no form of beauty to which he is indifferent, be it beauty of picture or statue, beauty of poems or music, beauty of architectural forms, beauty of flower or sea or sky, of mountain or of forest, of living forms and faces. And naturally he shrinks, as such a nature must, from every thing unlovely, from brutishness and squalor. These things go through him like a knife. And yet his breast is always bared to welcome them. No dainty hermit he, shutting himself away from the dark side of human life that he may be alone with his sensations of delight in all things beautiful. No, but he loves beauty so much that he would have it everywhere—have all enjoy it. He hates unloveliness so much that he would fain abolish it. All his delight in beauty is upon its other side a passion for the sweetening of society, the abolition of its vices and its crimes. His joy in all things beautiful is not a drug which breeds forgetfulness of human misery, but an anointment of the Holy Spirit sending him forth to wrestle with the myriad shapes of sorrow, shame, and sin.

The relation here exhibited between the love of beauty and all those forces in our society which seem at enmity with beauty is the relation which

ought always to exist. The fine arts should not be a refuge from nature and from life, but a suggestion of their possibilities, and not only of their possibilities, but of their actualities. At its best, art is an open door, admitting us to closer fellowship with nature and with life. It has failed of its best purpose when it has left its lover to imagine that the painted landscape is better than the real, the sculptured shape more wonderful than the palpitating human flesh, the comedy more comic than the comedy of life, the tragedy more tragic than the tragic elements of every-day experience. The best service that the beautiful arts can do a man is to remind him of the feast of beauty that is spread for him, on every side of which God himself is the purveyor; is to send him back to nature and to life and actual affairs to see what pictures are glowing there, what statues that are alive already without waiting for Pygmalion's intercession, what epics are being enacted, what lyrics and what pastorals are being sung. He is of all men the most pitiable who thinks, as many seem to think, that we must have recourse to art because life is stale, flat, and unprofitable, when the fact is that the most that art can do is to report some little fraction of the infinite living whole of beauty that lies all about us all the time. But the best is ever unreportable. What artist ever even tried to give an idea of the midnight firmament when it is

“All throbbing and panting with stars.”

Who of us has not seen living faces that put to

shame the loveliest that we have ever seen on canvas, and would if they were not alive? Who of us does not know of real idylls better than any ever sung by Tennyson or Virgil or Theocritus? How beautiful those little children in their utter nakedness asleep in marble! Yes, but how much more beautiful the living grace of your own little ones, fresh from the bath or lying in their rosy sleep!

“ Soon their eyes will open ; then in all the land
No such morning glories.”

Ruskin assures us that Turner’s *Slave Ship* is the greatest sea picture that Turner ever painted, and therefore the greatest sea picture ever painted by man. Let it be granted, though I doubt it very much, and who of us has not seen the sea a thousand times more beautiful than that—ay, even in its tamest mood. And what a blessing that these things are so! For everybody can not buy pictures and statues; everybody can not even see them at their best. But everybody can see the landscape and the sky, the waving grain, the rippling water, the shadows on the hills, the moonlight on the sea. Everybody can see grander women than the sculptor’s *Medea* or *Semiramis*. Everybody can see children lovelier even than Knaus’s or Vautier’s. Everybody can witness idylls in the making, perhaps assist at them, at epics too, ay, make their own life epical and lyrical. Everybody can be a spectator of more dreadful tragedies than Hamlet’s or Cordelia’s; only God help him if he remain only a spectator and does not nerve himself to be an actor on the

stage, if haply he may make the tragedy somewhat less tragical.

Do you say, If thus at every point life is superior to the achievement of the artist, the artist is superfluous. No, he is not. For, somehow, acquaintance with the artist's work has a wonderful aptitude for quickening our interest in nature and humanity, making us more observant of the mysteries of color and of form, and more perceptive of the comedy or tragedy inherent in our ordinary life. Of how many aspects of nature we have got our first intimation from the artist's representation. When a lady told Turner she had never seen a sky like one that he had painted, and he replied, "Don't you wish you could, madam?" his meaning wasn't, "Don't you wish there were such skies to see," but "Don't you wish you had the eyes to see them?" and very likely after that she had. We are all of us too quick to blame the artist's drawing, for in nine cases out of ten the fault is not in him, but in our previous lack of observation. And then we want the arts, the beautiful arts, not only to report nature and life to us, and send us back to them with quickened apprehensions, but we also want them to publish our joy in nature and in life, our gratitude for the strength of the strong mountains, the beauty of the everlasting hills. Let us worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. For holiness, you know, means wholeness. The first painting and statuary was of the nature of worship. Why not the last? It is only another way of saying those great words of Kep-

ler, "I think thy thoughts after thee, O God." Let us worship the Lord in the beauty of wholeness, the beauty which inheres in the integrity of art and life, which sees that both are of a piece, and that the best service art can do us is not to make us ashamed of life, hence taking refuge in art as an asylum from it, but in opening our eyes to see in what halls of music we are walking all the time, in what galleries of painting and sculpture, across what stages where epics are being chanted more sublime than Dante's or Homer's, tragedies are being enacted grander than Shakspere's. Art should be such a worship—the publication of our joy in universal nature and in human life, our glad acceptance of the universe. Life should be such an art.

The art of life. Life considered as a fine art. Well, so consider it, and see some of the consequences. We have seen that the artistic spirit is that spirit which compels a man to do his best for the best's sake. The shoemaker works in this spirit when he works up to his ideal of a good shoe, not down to his half-pay. The painter works in the spirit when he works up to his idea of a good picture, not down to Jones's offer or to Robinson's taste. And the man whose life in its integrity appeals to him as a fine art, who would not only do his special task but every thing in an artistic spirit, he will not work down to any praise of men, to any outward success, to any standard of the churches or of good society, but up to his own personal ideal of justice, truth, and holiness. Now, if this spirit is the spirit in which a man

should conduct his life, then is any system of religion put to utter shame which seeks to fasten a man's eye not on his work, but on some reward which has no vital and genetic relation thereunto. And this is what the average Christianity of Christendom has always sought to do ; what the average Christianity of Christendom is seeking to do at the present time. We are told over and over again that without such sanctions as the hope of heaven and the fear of hell men can not be expected to live a life of purity and holiness ; and we are told this not only by camp-meeting drivellers, but by men of culture and intelligence. "They" [*i.e.*, the heathen philosophers], says the historian Merivale, "insist upon the paradox that virtue is its own reward, and sin its own punishment ; that the tyrant on the throne is always, by the law and nature of things, miserable in comparison with the triumphant happiness of the good man, even in the dungeon or on the scaffold. So far were they from the teachings of St. Paul : that the man who has attained the highest pitch of grace and godliness would be of all men most miserable were his hopes bounded by this life and its recompenses." And we are left to infer that St. Paul had the best of it. I can not think so. To me it seems that the good man would still of all men be the most fortunate even if we had "our be-all and our end-all" here. To me it seems that that man is a poisoner of virtue who puts such premiums upon it as the hope or the dread of a hereafter, and that, moreover, the idea of immortality is degraded by being put to such a use,

stuck, as it were, into prize-packages of virtue, "a prize in every package," as the venders say upon the cars, to tempt the greedy and the avaricious. No, let life be a fine art. Let us work in the artistic spirit. If a thing is right, it must be done though all the hells should gape to catch the doer. If a thing is wrong, it must be shunned, nay, rather put beneath our heels, though all the heavens should bribe us to dishonor.

Another hint for him who fain would make his whole life artist work resides in the perception that in all the arts, useful and beautiful, the path of necessity is the path of victory. We are too apt to speak of subduing nature, of triumphing over nature, and so on. But the most that we can do is to put ourselves in a line with her tremendous forces. As Emerson has put it, "Our works must be conformed to her law, or they will be ground to powder by her omnipresent activity. You can not build your house or your pagoda as you will, but as you must. The leaning tower can only lean so far," not 45 degrees, as I notice the majority of people tip the leaning tower of Pisa, forgetful of their natural philosophy. "But if we work within her limits she yields us all her strength." If the tide is going out, the moon will serve us for an anchor to our dory as we leave her on the beach ; and if the tide is coming in, we have only to tie her to a stone, and the force of gravity—that is to say, the weight of the whole earth—is at our service. When a madman wanted Talleyrand to jump with him from the top of Castle Garden, Talleyrand said,

"No, my dear friend, but rather let us go down to the bottom and jump up here. That will be a feat worth telling of." In that instance it was the safer feat. But the safer feat is oftenest to go with nature rather than against her. And it has been observed that the same necessity which compels men in the useful arts to do things not as they would, but as they must, compels men in the fine arts to paint and write and carve and make music not as they would, but as they must. "Good poetry," says Emerson, "could not have been written otherwise than as it is. The first time you hear it it sounds rather as if copied out of some invisible tablet of the eternal mind than as if arbitrarily composed by the poet." No man ever yet wrote a great poem, or painted a great picture, or even preached a good sermon, because he would—nay, but because he must; so help him God, he can no otherwise. There is wilful work in abundance. But the best work is never wilful. The Sistine Madonna had to be painted; the Venus of Milo had to be carved; York and Peterborough and Salisbury had to be built; the symphonies of Beethoven had to be written. And this is why they are so beautiful.

"The passive artist lent his hand
To the vast soul that o'er him planned."

The art of life is subject to the same imperious necessity. We never tire of praising freedom, but our great prerogative is, after all, that we are not free, but infinitely bound. We are not free, that is, to do what we would, but only to do

what we ought. It is because the bondage of society and custom and ecclesiasticism keeps men from doing as they ought that we are justified in hounding it to death. But, after all, our highest act is one of voluntary submission—submission to no outward force or law, but to the divine necessity of our highest thought or mood or aspiration. What thou must do that thou shalt do, and it shall be entirely beautiful. Grieve not the Holy Spirit. Resist not that divine compulsion which drives thee back upon thy deepest self. So shall thy life become a willing piece of the eternal order, something that had to be, like the great poems and pictures, like the great seas and mountains.

It is by apprehending life in its totality as a fine art, something that we are to make as beautiful as we can make it, regardless of all consequences, careless of heaven or hell, that we are delivered from the curse of dilettantism, which infects so much of our æsthetic culture. For the everlasting *must* batters at every door by which a man would shut him from his kind in selfish isolation or more selfish clannishness, and turns the soul adrift into the world to share its sorrow and to work for its enfranchisement. The beauty of holiness, of wholeness, is not only the beauty of the wholeness of a man's nature in itself, each part consenting with the rest, but also of the wholeness of a man with all his fellow-men, so that he shall say, as saith the Buddhist saint, "Never will I accept private individual salvation, never will I enter into final peace alone."

There is nothing so unlovely as a selfish, isolated life, because it is the fundamental necessity of our social being that we should help each other. The man who does not yield himself to this necessity makes himself a wart, a wen, a hideous excrescence on the face of human life.

Let us then not be afraid of caring overmuch for beauty. Let us cleave fast to it wherever we behold it. Let us see to it, if possible, that it looks out upon us from our walls, and spreads itself upon our floors. Let us hearken to it in the voice of mighty poets and in the great tone-masters' glorious harmonies, but God forbid that any of these things should be a refuge from the paltriness and meanness and frivolity of our habitual life, but let them first of all remind us that we should make our lives picture and music, eloquence and song. *We should*, and, if we *will*, *we can*. I care not who you are, however humble your position, however commonplace your tasks, if you will but persistently obey those laws of truth and righteousness which are not far from any one of you, and which forever wait on your desire to know their secret, and which grow more clear with every day's obedience ; if you will but obey those laws, your daily life shall glow with a diviner beauty than of any picture that was ever hung on wall, than of any poem that was ever written, of any music that was ever played, simply because the actual beauty of a faithful, tender, and heroic life is more to God and man than the report or fiction of the most splendid deeds that have been done or dreamed since human life began.

THE EARTHWARD PILGRIMAGE.

I AM indebted for my subject and my text this morning to Mr. M. D. Conway : my subject, the Earthward Pilgrimage, being the title of a little book published by him some years ago ; my text, the title of its leading chapter, "How I left the world to come for that which is." These words, you will observe, are pretty nearly an exact inversion of the title of Bunyan's famous allegory, which he called, "The Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come," and in which he describes, in the similitude of a dream, the manner of his setting out, his dangerous journey, and his safe arrival in the desired country. It is a wonderful story that he tells—one that may well keep children from their play and old men from the chimney-corner, one whose grotesque and solemn phantasms were to my young life a source of inexpressible though fearful joy, the charm of which will long outlast the special system of theology which colors every page, even as the charm of Homer has outlasted the faith of men in his Olympian deities. The language of the book, like

that of Shakspere and Milton, is ploughed into the world. It is an armory from which thousands of moralists and preachers still draw their happiest illustrations. Hardly a day goes by and we do not hear something about the Slough of Despond, or Doubting Castle, or Vanity Fair, or the Hill of Difficulty, or the dreadful burden that fell off from the Pilgrim's shoulders and was seen no more. Whatever may come of Bunyan's system of theology, here as incarnate as the Roman Catholic system of Dante's time in his "Divine Comedy," and whatever systems dominate the future, we shall not lack for antitypes of Pliable and Worldly-Wiseman and Hate-Light and Ready-to-Halt and Talkative. If you do not know Mr. Great-heart you are not so fortunate as I, nor so unfortunate if you have not encountered Giant Despair at one time or another, nor again so fortunate if you cannot count a Mercy and a Hopeful and a Faithful too among your dearest friends.

There are more senses than one in which the pilgrimage of man from this world to that which is to come is still a subject of engrossing interest, and may well be so.

"Solemn before us looms the dark portal,
Goal of all mortal.
Stars silent rest over us;
Graves under us silent."

Death is a fact of our experience, so notable, so inevitable, that it may not be blinked. I find more tolerable the disposition that dwells upon it

with morbid earnestness than the cheap sentimentalism which seeks to bury it under flowers of rhetoric, as under roses and forget-me-nots the poor inanimate husk of our mortality. I have but little patience with the circumlocutions to which we resort in conversation, in obituary notices, and in mortuary inscriptions, to express the simple fact of death. Let us be more manly and honest and straightforward about this. Let us not pretend that death is altogether lovely, for it is not, whatever faith we have in life and love beyond.

That cheeks which mantled with love's rosy hue ;
That feet which wanted nothing else to do
But run upon love's errands, this and this ;
That hands so fair they had not seemed amiss
Reached down by angels through the deeps of blue—
That all of these so deep in earth should lie
While season after season passeth by ;
That things which are so sacred and so sweet
The hungry roots of tree and plant should eat ;
Oh for one hour to see as thou dost see,
My God, how great the recompense must be !

If some could have their way the fact of death would be so buried under sugared phrases that all of its enormous pathos would be gone, and there would not be left a yard of ground for men to plant courageous feet upon. I must confess that I like Bryant's *Thanatopsis* because it so manfully accepts without any shuffling or equivocation the colossal fact of death, calls it by its name, and *then* embraces it with noble resignation. This seems to me a hundred times truer and better than to mask the solemn face of death

with the insipid features of a smiling faun. It seems to me that that philosophy of life is condemned already from which the opportunity for a hard and lofty courage is excluded. For all our flimsy rhetoric, life is not "roses, roses all the way."

And so in this most literal sense of all the journey from this life to that which is to come, down through the valley of the shadow, may well be made the subject of much serious reflection. And as with this most literal sense so with the most ideal. What but a pilgrimage from this life to another and a better is, or should be, all of this mortal life of ours? Our City of Destruction—what is it but our present ignorance and selfishness? Our City Celestial, what is it but the ideal of beauty, truth, and good, toward which we should forever yearn and strive. And, between this and that, what sloughs of despond, what doubting castles, what hills of difficulty, and what glib companions to persuade us that we should be satisfied with something short of that which is, we know, our only proper goal; yes, but what mounts of vision also on the way; what stalwart arms to hold us up in days of weariness; what men and women to believe in us when we can hardly in ourselves! So in this high ideal sense life is a pilgrimage, and from this world to one that is to come—a pilgrimage so long and arduous, beset with so many dangers, rich with so many opportunities, that the genius of a Bunyan were inadequate to tell of all its wonderful significance.

It was not in this sense that Bunyan wrote of leaving this world for that which is to come, nor

in the more literal sense which also I have spoken of. His "this world" was the world of human sympathies and passions and delights; his "world which is to come" a state of future happiness, depending on our individual belief and conduct within the limits of the present life. It must be allowed that, accepting these interpretations of "this life" and "that which is to come," there is still an immense variety of ways of setting forth the relation of the two, and Bunyan's way is much more honorable than that of many others. There is a moral strain through all of Bunyan's complicated and grotesque and crowded allegory which should make him a very dangerous teacher in the eyes of those evangelists to whom of all soul-endangering pitfalls morality appears the deepest and most dangerous. A writer of the ability of Mr. Frederick Harrison does himself no credit when he allows himself to speak of the inveterate *other-worldliness* which is the most characteristic trait of Christianity, not to speak of other religions, as if it were invariably puerile and selfish, as if it had but one aspect, and that a paltry and debasing one. In fact, the aspect of this other-worldliness is as various as human character and culture. The relation between "this world" and "the world which is to come" is differently figured by different men. With some it is a purely magical relation; these are the sacramentalists. Our good or evil fortune in the life beyond the tomb is determined, these assure us, by the fidelity with which we have conformed to certain outward ceremonies,

such as baptism and the eucharist. It is not pretended that there is any natural and genetic relation between these ceremonies and a life of everlasting happiness or misery. It is only pretended that God has made such happiness or misery to depend upon these ceremonies. With others the relation between this life and that which is to come is a dogmatic relation. The dogmatists maintain that what a man believes about the Trinity or the Atonement or some other doctrine determines for eternity the standing of the immortal soul. With others still the relation between this life and that which is to come is an emotional relation. Upon some moment of ecstatic sense of sin and need of a divine saviour hinges the door of heaven. Such are the typical attitudes of sacramental and dogmatic and emotional religion. But there is a good deal of variation from the type in every Christian sect. The typical Unitarian is rational and unsectarian, but we have all known Unitarians as irrational as any Calvinist, as sectarian as any Presbyterian. So among Roman Catholics there are thousands who expect to prosper or to fail in extra-mundane spheres less in proportion to their ecclesiastical conformity than in proportion to their honor, purity, and tenderness. So among Protestant dogmatists there are thousands who count very little on their belief in this or that to secure their ultimate well-being. What they count on is their deeds of righteousness and charity. And so with the emotional religionists. Nominally they all believe in instantaneous salvation. Practically, a

good many of them believe that salvation is a life-long process. And now gather up into one whole all of this diverse other-worldliness, this sentiment which lives perpetually in the thought of what is going to be beyond the grave and what effect our present life will have upon the future. The type of all this life is grossly selfish. But in all ages there have been thousands, and there are thousands still, whose other-worldliness is not altogether selfish. They do not think of heaven as reward for any thing they have believed or done or felt, but as a boundless opportunity for growth in knowledge and in love. We of the rational school are too apt, I fear, to forget that such persons as this really do exist in all the churches. Because in nine cases out of ten other-worldliness is utterly selfish we get into the way of thinking of it and speaking of it as if it were so invariably. There are those whose other-worldliness is as incontestable as the worldliness of Beau Nash or Lord Chesterfield, whose thoughts of the hereafter are all thoughts of an unselfish life, a life of rapturous contemplation of the infinite holiness and love of God ; and the contemplation of such a heavenly ideal reacts upon their daily lives and makes them altogether pure and sweet and holy.

In simple fairness this must be allowed, and also that we cannot be too tender of the other-worldliness of those for whom the other-world is more populous than this with their beloved. This other-worldliness is natural and human, while much of that of which I have been speaking is ecclesiastical and theological. And not only when

the balance of our affection is upon the heavenly side, when many have gone forth and few remain, but oftentimes when one of many has gone forth alone into the vast untried, the hearts of those who stay behind yearn after him with an unspeakable affection. They never cease from wondering how it is with him—from wishing they might somehow speak across to him and have him answer back ; they clutch at every straw which promises to yield to their persistent breath some little strain of heavenly melody. Even such other-worldliness as this has need of being bravely summoned to the bar of conscience. Our passionate affection for the dead may not excuse us from our duties to the living. We must allow no grief to absorb all our energies. We must come out into the landscape and the cheerful day ; we must address ourselves to our remaining tasks with higher consecration. Welcome to be an honored part, we must not allow even the most commanding sorrow to engross the whole of life.

And still when full allowance has been made for every higher form of other-worldliness, the fact remains that *from the world to come to that which is*, is the highway along which religious thought and life are already travelling, and are bound to travel with diviner force and more hilarious joy. Time has been when to go in this direction was like going almost alone against a crowd. Art, science, poetry, religion, all the activities and forces of our mortal life, went rushing heavenward with impetuous eagerness. The earth, although regarded as the centre of the

sidereal universe, was constantly reviled. The human body, although theologically destined to a final resurrection and remarriage with the soul, shared in the disgrace of Mother Earth, its great progenitress. Christian hymnology and religious phraseology are studded thick with the survivals of these modes of thought and feeling. The earth is everywhere the symbol of the base, the mean, the low. Thirty years ago our own "Book of Hymns" was an immense improvement on any of its predecessors, but how many hymns there are in it we cannot read to-day because of the contempt they heap upon the earth ! "Thoughts of earth, be silent now." We know it does not mean thoughts of the literal earth of seas and mountains ; but we do not like to have the beautiful and bounteous earth used as a symbol of baseness. And not only have men despised the earth, but all the life which men have lived upon it, save as this life has had some reference to a life to be resumed elsewhere. Men's natural affections, their intellectual abilities, their desires for comfort, beauty, wealth, for art and luxury—all of these things have been huddled together under the common designation of "this world," and overtaken by a common condemnation. Life has had its centre of gravity not here and now, but there and then. The one great thing has been to manage our affairs in such a way that we shall be secure of everlasting happiness. But whether selfishly or unselfishly, the future has engrossed the total energy of life—the total enthusiasm at any rate. Only the merest dregs have been reserved for

earthly things. The allegory of Bunyan has found its pathetic realization in thousands and ten thousands of men and women who, like his storied Pilgrim, have left this world for that which is to come.

Where is the Bunyan who shall write the allegory of to-day, the new Pilgrim's Progress from the world which is to come to this which is, the manner of his setting out, the dangers of the way, and how he came at length safely to the desired country? The theme is worthy of the most consummate artist. It may well be that no one shall set it forth in its entirety. Here one shall sing a canto and there another, even as the cantos of the Iliad and Odyssey were sung, accordingly to the Wolfian theory; but all of them at length shall gravitate together into harmonious unity. Already here and there I seem to hear the strains which shall be gathered up into the final symphony. They are poems of Wordsworth and Tennyson and Bryant, of Browning and Whittier and Burns. They are sermons by Martineau and Robertson and Parker. They are lectures by Tyndall and Huxley and Gray. They are books upon such seemingly unpoetic subjects as sewer-gases and filth diseases, and reports upon the ventilation of school-houses and the pollution of rivers. They are the new inventions in machinery that multiply a hundredfold the natural force of man. They are model tenement-houses. They are all things whatsoever that contribute to make this earthly human life of ours saner and sweeter, to weaken the bonds of ignorance, to extend the

boundaries of knowledge, to abridge the limits of disease and crime, to widen human sympathies, to temper charity with prudence, to people this great planet home of ours with a diviner race of beings, women and men more gloriously dowered.

“ Self-reverent each, and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities.”

I cannot but think that in this new allegory, call it an epic rather, there will be place and room for every noble personage in the older allegory to display his powers. Here also there shall be a Faithful and a Hopeful, a Mr. Great-heart too. Nor shall the journey lack for dangers equal to those by which poor Christian was beset. Sloughs of Despond shall not be one, but many. Hills of Difficulty shall not be few, nor Doubting Castles. Ready-to-Halt and Pliable and Talkative —these shall be very ably represented.

Time was, as I have said already, when to undertake this backward march from the world which is to come to this which is, was to encounter almost every thing and everybody going the other way. But it is so no longer. The arts and sciences are coming back to earth. So is morality, once regarded as the arbitrary law of an infinite despot whose might made right, now coming to be regarded as the science and the art of social life. The direction here is every thing. “ How far to Taunton ? ” asked the traveller. “ Well, if you keep on the way you are faced now,” was the answer, “ it’s about 25,000 miles ; but if you turn right square about, it isn’t more than two

or three." The direction here is every thing. Which way are you facing? How does the problem of life present itself to you? Is it the main thing with you to manage so that you shall have an eternity of future happiness credited to you upon the book of life, or is it simply and only "to turn to good account all fair and wholesome things beneath the sun, and to maintain as your ideal the health and splendor of the body, mind, and will of man;" to put as much into this mortal life as you can and get as much out of it; to drink as deep as possible at every fountain of unsullied knowledge, love, and joy? If you are facing this way, then you are already started from the world to come, already on your way to this which is. If you are facing the other way, you are still the antitype of Bunyan's Pilgrim. Happy are you if this world and the world to come stand in your thought for things as really less and greater, as they do with Bunyan on the whole. For, as I have once said already, all other-worldliness is not of the same sort. There is a sort of other-worldliness which is not unto death.

But give it the full benefit of the most generous interpretation, and still it seems to me that *from the world to come to this which is*, rather than *from this world to that which is to come*, is the direction which the world is taking more and more; is the direction which all true men ought to take and keep with manly resolution.

Does it appear to you that such a complete reversal of the direction of a man's purpose and enthusiasm implies some doubt of the existence of

another sphere of life on which we are to enter, when we have seen the last of this? It does not so appear to me. It might if I believed that by any spasm of emotion, or any dogmatic assumption, or any ecclesiastical magic, it were possible for us within the limits of our mortal life to fix ourselves in an estate of bliss forever. But I do not believe this. There is no reason why I should. It is absurd upon its face. It is as monstrous as it is absurd. If I believed that God had made the world on such a plan as that, I might duck and cringe to him, but I should hate him and despise him in my heart. If I were brave enough I should prefer the worst of his damnation to becoming party to an arrangement so unjust. Or, if I were magnanimous enough, I might unite with Omar Khayyám, the Persian poet, in that stanza where he says :

“ O Thou who man of baser earth didst make,
And even with Paradise devise the snake,
For all the sin wherewith the face of man
Is blackened—man’s forgiveness give and—*take*.”

But granting that there is no such relation between the life which now is and that which is to come, if this last is a reality, there must, you say, be some relation. Certainly. The life to come must be affected by the manner of our present life. Assuredly. But there is nothing that we know about the life to come which can be elevated into a motive-power, which is not equally present within the limits of the present life. In fact, of

the life to come we know absolutely nothing. Our nearest approach to knowledge is the inference that our spiritual natures and their spiritual environment will be much the same there as they are here ; if not, we have no real immortality. What we do know is, that we can make this present life of ours a pretty or a glorious thing. What we do know is, that it is just as incumbent on us to choose the great alternative, though life

“should terminate in cold oblivion,
As if Elysian pleasures at its close
Gleamed palpable to sight as things of earth.”

What we do know is, that we can live in such a way as to make life a better opportunity for other men and women here, now, and after we are dead and gone, than it would otherwise be. What we do know is, that if there be, as still we greatly trust, immortal life beyond, so that there be one God, one universe, the laws of being must be there what they are here, and consequently the only way to fit one's self for heaven is to live here upon the earth the most rational and beautiful and joyous life we can.

But there are those who think it is unspiritual to abandon other-worldly dreams, and confine our speculations and ideals within the limits of the present life. There could not be a greater fallacy. The root of it is evident enough. “The spiritual world” is a favorite designation of the future life. It means the world of spirits. And so all thinking about this world is supposed to be

spiritual thought, and religion is considered spiritual just in proportion as it concerns itself with it. But the real spiritual things are beauty, truth, and holiness, and these things are just as spiritual here on this pleasant earth as they can be in any possible heaven. Religion is not necessarily spiritual because it concerns itself with an imaginary future. Mohammed's celestial houris are not a whit more spiritual because they are in paradise. The ideal—that is the spiritual. Let a man set his heart on this and he is spiritual enough. I have known men whose talk was all of heaven who were as unspiritual as swine ; and I have known men whose " conversation was in heaven," though they said very little about it, who were as spiritual as any possible angel, because they lived continually in thoughts of beauty, truth, and good.

Welcome then, say I, to the new religion, to the new ideal. It is the ideal of human life made strong and pure and joyous, large and wise. It is the ideal of a divine society here on the solid earth, roofed over by resplendent heavens that shall accuse our littleness no more, but hold us worthy partners of their invariable order and beneficent activity. Hail to the travellers hitherward ! They come along a hundred different roads which all converge upon the Here and Now. They are men of science, who, by interpreting for us the laws of matter, make us hold our breath with awe. Never again shall we contemn that solemn haunt of mystery and law. They are

these others who repeat for us the story of the sea and mountains, telling us how the surface of the earth was carved into its present form, and clothed upon with all its flowing drapery of forests, fields, and streams. And the more we know about her history the more we love the dear old earth. Travellers hitherward? They are all those whose energy is spent in tracing for us the illimitable past of mankind on the earth rather than his illimitable future in the heavens. They are all those to whom it seems absurd to talk of saving a man's soul till you have tried to save his body from disease and dirt, his mind from ignorance, his hands from idleness, his children from a pauper's grave or worse, a pauper's home. Doubtless mistakes are being made by those who are enamored of these new ideals. But the least in this kingdom of heaven on the earth, I am persuaded, be he Communist or what not, is greater than any John the Baptist of the older dispensation. After manifold mistakes we shall at length discover the right way. After much fumbling the key will slip at length into its place. The doors will open, and admit us to our hearts' desire.

Does it seem chimerical to you, this vision of an enlightened, purified, and glorified humanity succeeding to these squalid hordes, these warring races, these drunken politicians making an orgy of the closing hours of their Congressional debates? It may well seem so, and yet you must distrust that seeming. This vision is a vision

we must never cease to cherish. Its realization is a long way off, but it will come one day.

“The airs of heaven blow o'er me,
A glory shines before me
Of what mankind shall be—
Pure, generous, brave, and free.”

Happy the men and women who shall be living then! and happy those who can believe in such a day 'mid the harsh noises of our own, and speed its laggard feet by some good act or timely word! But what is required of us is not that we shall all set up as professional reformers. Of such there are enough already in the world, if, indeed, there be not too many. I distrust all panaceas—all schemes for the immediate and complete emancipation of the world from all the evils that oppress humanity. The most of the would-be reformers at the present time are making matters worse. They would begin by overturning the whole social fabric which mankind has been building these fifty or one hundred thousand years. By no such revolution, but by evolution of the slowest, surest sort, shall we, God helping us, bring in the better time.

Do I then preach discouragement? Is there nothing left for us to do but to sit with idle hands and watch the Almighty's purpose gradually unfold? And oh *how* gradually! Oh yes, there is something more than this for us to do. Something? There is much. Professional reformers are a drug in the market. But of practical reformers there are not yet too many. You would reform society, would you? You would do something

to help bring in the reign of order, light, and love? Well, if you really would, you can right speedily. And you need be no knight-errant "on a red roan steed of steeds" in order to accomplish something worth accomplishing. You can begin just where you are. How? By no longer pretending to know what you do not know; by being willing to confess your ignorance in order that you may arrive at further knowledge; by putting something more of conscience into your daily task, whatever it may be; by treating your servants and employés a little more like human beings; by making sure that you are yourself one honest man amid the general failure of integrity—by any of these little things or all of them together you shall approve yourself a manful servant of the new ideal. What? They do not pique your courage? Try them, and see if ere a single day is done you do not find yourself in some heroic situation. Verily in every man's business, in every woman's household, there are opportunities for courage such as knight-errants seldom found upon their eager quests. Never fear but that even Sidney's cup of water shall be yours to give unto some other ere all the fight is done. I often think that this old world of ours would be as dubious of its identity as Rip Van Winkle was of his, if for one little year all men and women everywhere should stop complaining of their neighbors' sins and crimes, and seek to rise, for once, to the level of their own plainest opportunities. It is too much to hope for any such conspiracy. In Holmes's fable, when all the world

agreed to shout at once, but one old woman shouted. That was ridiculous. But if one man, alone in all the world, should go about to do his simplest duty, without any hesitation, fear, or boasting, it would be sublime.

“ The airs of heaven blow o’er me,
A glory shines before me
Of what mankind shall be—
Pure, generous, brave, and free.

“ A dream of man and woman,
Diviner, but still human,
Solving the riddle old,
Shaping the Age of Gold.

“ The love of God and neighbor ;
An equal-handed labor ;
The richer life where beauty
Walks hand in hand with duty.

“ Ring, bells in unreared steeples,
The joy of unborn peoples !
Sound trumpets far off blown ;
Your triumph is our own !”

THE INFINITE LIFE OF MAN

DR. CHANNING'S advice to a young preacher was, Never preach from any but great subjects. My subject upon this occasion would, if I am not mistaken, satisfy his exigent ideal. It is the Infinite Life of Man. By this I do not mean a life of infinite duration. Whether the future life of our desire and faith is to be such a life, or is only to furnish—as one of my most gentle friends believes and loves to believe, having, she fancies, Tennyson's high warrant—

“Some landing-place to clasp and say,
Farewell, we lose ourselves in light,”—

this is too great a question to be entered upon here and now ; or, at any rate, it is not a question to the discussion of which I find myself irresistibly attracted. There is an infinite life of man apart from his unending life beyond those graveyard mounds, which, to the imaginations of our hearts, are higher than the Alps or Himalayas. If we may trust the New Testament in this particular, there is even an *eternal* life of man which is not coextensive with the perpetuity of his in-

dividual life beyond the grave. The words eternal life, as used in the New Testament, especially in the Fourth Gospel, have not unfrequently an extra-temporal significance. They do not express the idea of immortality. They do not express any continuance of the future life, but a quality of the life which now is. Eternal life is life which here and now is centred and stands fast in the Eternal—the Eternal who loveth righteousness. Eternal life is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This is the New Testament doctrine. But the word infinite is not bound up with the idea of duration any thing like so much as the word eternal ; and therefore, if it is legitimate to speak of the eternal life of man apart from any doctrine of his individual persistency, it is still more legitimate to speak of the infinite life of man apart from any such doctrine, not because of any denial of its truth or doubt of its importance, but because something else is just as true, just as important, which, in the average preaching and teaching of the Christian world, comes in for vastly less consideration.

This is the age of science, and we would not have it any thing but this. But is there not a little danger that in our admiration of the chemists and astronomers, the physicists and biologists, we may come to think of these as if they were exhaustive of the possibilities of life ; as if what they do not know is not worth knowing ; as if what cannot be proved with scientific tests, and expressed in scientific terms, must straightway be counted out ? I grant the danger is not

so great as it appears to be ; that there are men who talk as if they cared for nothing which is not purely scientific who might be caught a dozen times a day enjoying themselves in some quite unscientific manner, taking a quite unscientific satisfaction in this or that or the other thing, and feeling very sure of some things for which they could not give a single scientific reason. I have heard of a man who found abundant consolation for the wasting sickness of his wife in the opportunity it furnished him for scientific study of her case ; and I have known another who seemed to me to miss almost entirely the human, infinite aspects, as I should call them, of his child, through making it, from the first moment of its individual existence, an object of unwearied scientific observation and experiment. But, fortunately, such cases are exceptional. And still the danger of which I have spoken is not imaginary. The loves of a man's heart may triumph over his morbid scientism, and insure him many a genuine thrill of infinite delight, while much besides that properly belongs to him may be forever missed.

To doubt if all the meaning and the joy of life can be reduced to scientific terms is not to doubt that all things go by law. But science, it must be remembered, is not the subjective human counterpart of the complete and perfect law of the Eternal. It is only the subjective human counterpart of a very little of that law, the merest fragment of it here and there. We cannot find out the Almighty to perfection. Doubtless we could not if we had æons instead of years for the

endeavor. But we have years and not æons, and all that we can reduce to terms of law, with all our patience and persistency, in threescore years and ten, is but a hand's-breadth to the whole. In the mean time, life and the enjoyment of it do not wait exclusively upon our knowledge; do not fail us in direct proportion to our ignorance of the controlling laws of physical and spiritual phenomena. The scientifically comprehended, this is the finite; that is to say, the measured, the bounded. All which has not been thus comprehended, thus measured and bounded, is the infinite; and the life of man in this, his relish and enjoyment of it, is his infinite life. Deprive the average life of men of this infinite element, and it would shrivel to the merest fraction of its present amplitude.

As to assert this infinite element is not to deny that all things go by law, is not to doubt that if we were omniscient we could see the law of those things which are now most baffling to our search, even the most delicately beautiful, the most spiritually significant of them all—"the infinite hearing of a deaf Beethoven, the infinite vision of a blind Milton, a Michael Angelo's cry for liberty from the stones of the quarry in an age when the tongues of men were forced to be dumb"—as to assert an infinite element in life is not to doubt that if we could see as God sees, into the heart of all these things, we should see that every one of them was an expression of invariable law, nor less the rarest beauty that our eyes have seen, the dearest love our hearts have ever known—as

the assertion of an infinite element in life is not to deny or doubt any of these things, so is it not to doubt or to deny that if the law were everywhere discoverable—a pure impossibility—life would be just as good and sweet as it is now. What I want to say is, not that life is better just in proportion to the infinite element which it contains—the incalculable, the immeasurable—but that the good of life is not contracted to the limits of the finite and the comprehensible ; that it consists, to an immense degree, in that which we can in no wise stretch the line upon. The infinite is always passing over into the finite, as the unknown is becoming known. And there are those who seem to fancy that this transformation is going to be fatal to our awe and wonder, to our sense of mystery. It is written in the Apocrypha, “The more thou searchest the more thou shalt wonder ;” but they do not believe any such thing. They believe that the more men know about the stars the less they will wonder at them ; the more they know about the flowers, the less they will rejoice in them. But, for myself, I doubt if scientific knowledge ever unmade a single natural poet since the world began. There are men who can see nothing but the scientific side of things ; but they are men who, if they did not see that, would not see any thing. Unmake their science, and you would not make them poets. But once let a man have a poetic nature, and his every increment of scientific knowledge shall be as added fuel to the flame. In the range of my own personal experience, the greatest poet of the stars

whom I have ever known, the man whose voice soonest gets tremulous with awe in speaking of them, is the man who knows more about them than any other man of my acquaintance. So, too, of all those whom I have known for whom flowers have had a tender and poetic meaning, the most conspicuous have been those who have been the best informed. Their botanical learning did not make them poets. No more did it unmake their poetry. It nourished it with constant insight into the wonderful and subtle make of leaf and blossom. Stout Roman Catholics, they were more reverent of flowers than any Protestant of my acquaintance. They never plucked a flower they did not mean to cherish. And for all their learning, they could have taken Wordsworth's confession on their lips with perfect truth :

"For me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Small need for us to hug our ignorance, as if with that our awe and reverence and poetry would also go away, and leave us comfortless. Though we could read the law of Shakspere's art, of Beethoven's music, ay, of Jesus' righteousness, they would not be a whit less wonderful. We know that every possible effect of melody or harmony in music is the result of purely mathematical relations. Not less the master's symphony embodies all your peace and gladness, or all your sorrow and distress. It would no less, if you could render every note in mathe-

matical equivalents. But of all the arts, music is the least finite, the most infinite. It can express no thought. It can express only emotion, and emotion is always infinite. If even here the certainty of mathematical relations does not abate the spiritual significance of the artist's work, if the perception of these relations would not either, we may be well assured that the finiteness of science can never be inimical to the infinite in any form of art. The more thou searchest, the more thou *shalt* wonder; and not only at the things discovered, but at the vast unknown, which grows more vast as seen from every higher point of vantage. It is only tyros in poetry or science who have any fear or expectation that the unknown is going to be conquered right away, and added to the known. The function of science is to reduce the objective infinite, not the subjective. I mean that, while it actually makes the unknown less, to the appreciation of the seeker it causes it to steadily increase. It is only those who know a little who feel that they know almost every thing—the school-girl who, at seventeen or eighteen, tells you she has "finished her education;" the young man who has just been graduated from the university. Twenty years later, if they go on studying hard and all the time, they will discover that their education had scarcely begun then, when they thought it finished. They will know infinitely more and will seem to know infinitely less in proportion to the vast extent of the unknown which stretches out before them. Nothing is so fatal to conceit as knowledge. The

more a man knows, the less likely is he to be vain.

So far is scientific knowledge from being antagonistic to the sense of infinite relations that it has increased this sense a hundred, ay, a thousand fold since first it got a decent hearing on the earth. For the contracted time-view and space-view of the days of ignorance it has substituted in either case a practical infinity. Over against Archbishop Usher's four thousand and four years before Christ for the beginning of the universe, it writes no definite number. Of this only it is certain, that the history of our own little planet, in its individual form, has already exhausted hundreds of thousands of years ; and that to the history of the universe this has been, as it were, only a drop in the bucket. Adding to this the multiplication of the stars, and of their distances and bulks, by telescopic observation, and, on the other hand, all that the microscope and chemical analysis have done to extend our knowledge of the microcosmic side of things, their infinite smallness, infinite nicety of adaptation, part to part, and from being regarded as the antagonist of our sense of infinite relations, science must come to be regarded as an ally of this sense second to no other. And it would still be this, if only what it has revealed were to be counted. "Let there be priests," said Arthur Hugh Clough, "to preserve the known ; and let them, as is their office, magnify their office, and say, It is all. But there shall also be priests to vindicate the unknown ; nor shall it be accounted

presumption in them to maintain—It is not all.” *It is not all*; who *are* the priests that are maintaining this among us at the present time concerning all the sum of human knowledge, if not those who minister at the altars of “star-eyed science”? They tell us that upon the utmost verge of their discoveries they have found themselves confronted by an infinite unknown from which as yet, in answer to their cry, they get no definite response, only the echo of their voices. Little they know of the results of scientific seeking who fear that every thing is going to be explained, so that there will be no region of the undiscovered from which a cooling wind of mystery and awe shall blow upon our faces, as with straining eyes we seek to penetrate its depths of wonder. Scribes who are well instructed in this kingdom of science are never troubled with any such fear. The more they know, the less their knowledge seems to them, compared with that illimitable sphere on which their knowledge everywhere abuts.

It is not really science, then, that is antagonistic to the infinite element in human life. It is the conceit of would-be scientific men, who have never made a single first-hand observation or experiment. These are the men who think that science is exhaustive of the capabilities of life, and that we have got already quite or pretty nearly to the end of things—been through the universe with microscope and blowpipe, and found there is no God, nothing but matter and force. As there are men who talk in such a way

about religion that we are impelled to say, "So help us God, we will not be religious," so when we hear such men as I have indicated talk of science, we are impelled to say, "So help us God, we will not be scientific." But as religion is not to be measured by the talk of those who make it a stench in our nostrils, so is not science to be measured by the talk of those who have but dabbled in some little pool of scientific truth, mistaking it for the illimitable ocean on which the great discoverers career.

Science is not antagonistic to the infinite element in life, but it is not inclusive of it, nor would it be if every law were known of every one of all the innumerable phenomena of nature and of human life. Why but because the science still would be the knowledge of phenomena? And the knowledge of phenomena cannot be exhaustive of the capabilities of human life. We are not only knowing subjects, but, at the same time, feeling and acting and loving. And therefore an object of finite knowledge may, at the same time, be an object of infinite delight or service or devotion. You know, for instance, all that the botanist can tell you about a certain flower—its anatomy and physiology, the number, shape, and function of its various parts. And this knowledge is finite; it has its limits. But not so your thrill of happiness as you come upon this flower—

"Blue, blue, as if the sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall"—

as you are walking across country some October

day and find it with the dew upon its fringes, shooting up, so straight and tall, as if it were intent on getting back, as soon as possible, to its native heaven. The joy that stirs in you at such a sight as that is simply infinite. And all the more so if the flower which greets your eye is fragrant for you not only with its own peculiar odor, but with some dear association with the happiness or sorrow of your life. All the botanists can tell me about the marigolds, for example, I am glad to know, but with a finite gladness. But the gladness becomes infinite as ever ; at the sight of them I think of Keats' line—

“Open afresh your rounds of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds ;”

and yet more infinite when suddenly the individual flower fades out, and in its place I see a little garden full of them and other just such homely flowers, and then a little room filled with an aged presence, so comfortable and happy and benign, that even now, across a score of years, the recollection of her makes a quiet moment in the heart of the most troubled day.

Well then might Shakspere say, in Hamlet's voice, “What a piece of work is man ! How infinite in faculties !” Yes, even in his faculty of knowing he is infinite. Why, but because the universe is so, and short of this there is no limit to his possibilities of further apprehension ? Theologians have written learnedly about the limits of religious thought ; but there are no such limits. It is only in the interest of an estab-

lished system of theology that theologians have imagined that there are. "Stick to your theology," says Tyndall to the theologians. "Stick to your science," retort the theologians upon him, when he turns theologian in his Belfast address; and so the advice is mutually cancelled. You cannot draw a line and say to thought, Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther. You cannot shut the theologian out from science, nor the man of science from theology; at least, you cannot without harm. The theologian must go deeper into science; the man of science deeper in theology. Both must search all things, even the deep things of God.

Even the scientific faculty is infinite; not science, which is the sum of all the laws thus far discovered, but the faculty, which stands as yet upon the threshold of a temple whose inmost shrine it yet shall penetrate, to find, perhaps, as Pompey found to his astonishment in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem—*no image of a God. No image*, and yet, not less, perhaps, but all the more, an omnipresent Deity.

But there is imaginative as well as scientific thought. And this is infinite, not only in its absence of all limit to its possible extension, but in its actual attainment. It takes the wings of the morning, and dwells in the uttermost parts of the sea. Its eyes, as Herbert says, dismount the highest star. Did Jesus say, "I was before Abraham"? Thanks to this faculty of imaginative thought, we can get back of Abraham and Adam twenty times a day—back of the individual

existence of this earth ; back of the individual existence of the sun ; back to the time when all the luminaries that bestud the nightly heavens were one undistinguished nebulous mass. Space is no more an obstacle to us than time. Did you not help to storm the “ Karadagh” at Kars the other day, or help defend it till the bitter end ? Were you not on the Huron’s sinking deck ? But feats like these are tame to the imaginations of the poet. What privacy is there he cannot enter, and Hamlet talking with his mother shall not suspect so much as even a mouse behind the arras ! Be he Chaucer or Shakspere, he can make mediæval knights and squires figure in Greece before the Trojan war. As Dante, he can wander through purgatory, hell, and paradise ; as Milton, sit at the Almighty’s as he had sat at Cromwell’s council table.

But this mention of the poets bridges for us the gulf between the reasoning and the æsthetic life of man, or rather shows us that we have already crossed the invisible boundary. The æsthetic life of man is always infinite. If Mr. Story could invent a mathematical formula for the creation of a perfect statue, even if we knew the formula by heart, the joy which we should take in the statue, call it *Medea* or *Semiramis*, would still be an infinite joy. For every stroke that makes for beauty, there is no doubt a law ; but for the most part it is a law by which the artist is unconsciously controlled, not one he consciously obeys :

“ The passive master lent his hand
To the vast soul that o’er him planned,”

Though every note in music has its definite mathematical relation, yet verily it was not by mathematics only that Beethoven wrote his glorious symphonies, his exquisite sonatas. There was an infinite element of joy or sorrow, triumph or despair, involved in every movement of the score. And were it otherwise with the creation of the artist, with the enjoyment it would not be otherwise. This would be infinite, unlimited, unbounded, though the score had been the offspring of the merest mathematical calculation. We go to the concert, and the handbills tell us what the music was meant to express. But does it express that and that only? If it does, then it is descriptive music; which, whether it describe the roar of cannon or the song of birds, is music of an inferior nature. The chances are that it expresses forty other things *for you* better than that put down upon the bill. It expresses your wonder and your awe; your joy if it is jubilant, your sorrow if it wails; your aspirations if it yearns, your longing if it pleads; your conflict if the theme seems irrecoverably lost amid the rivalry of diverse instruments; your victory and peace when it emerges once again and triumphs over all. Of all the arts, music is the most obviously infinite; but all its sister arts share in its infinite belongings. Call the Venus of Milo a statue of "History recording victory," and still the rose of her majestic womanhood will smell as sweet. Architecture is the nearest approach to music in its lack of definite intention, so that to call it "frozen music" was no mere conceit. But

painting, poetry, and sculpture tend to greater definition. It was no compliment to the artist's picture to mistakenly hang it upside down. The poem which needs a commentary, the picture or statue which does not tell its own story, is well-nigh condemned already. But the limit of the artist's aim is not the necessary limit of the significance we find in his achievement. Need Raphael's Madonnas have their meaning and suggestion limited to Mary and her child? Or do they better represent the tenderness and joy of universal motherhood? Does it make much difference whether Michael Angelo's "Thinker" represents Lorenzo or Giuliano de Medici, so long as it is the embodiment of meditative thought in every line of its configuration? Revolving affairs of state, is he? Why not as well the mystery of life and death and immortality? Does any real poem or story represent a definite quantity of meaning, so that it is exactly the same poem or story to Peter, James, and John? Is the garden-song in *Maud* the same to those who are in love and those who are not? *In Memoriam* the same to those who have and those who have not lost a precious, priceless friend? Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* the same to those who are and those who are not tortured by a secret sin? George Eliot's *Romola* the same to those who have and those who have not Tito's disposition to consider first and always their own comfort, ease, and happiness? Is not the commentary of the individual heart and conscience always more than what is written in the text?

But there is a beauty in comparison with which the beauty of art is poor and weak and tame. It is the beauty of the Divine Artist, of his seas and mountains, of his forests and his streams, of his sunsets and his stars, of his human forms and faces outshining all that have been carved or painted, nor waiting for Pygmalion's eager prayer to palpitate with life. The men of science tell us that all this is easy to explain. Those forms and colors please the eye and mind which represent the minimum of visual effort. It may be so ; it has a reasonable sound. Natural beauty is, then, finite and definite enough. Yes, but not so the soul's enjoyment of it. This is not finite ; this is not definite. This is immeasurable, unbounded, infinite. Grant that the minimum of visual effort is at the bottom of it all, the fact remains the same. If God can furnish us with such marvellous entertainment at such small expense, he is a wonderful ²economist.

Again, the life of man is infinite upon the side of righteousness. Not but that this also has its law. Not but that its line of evolution may be traced from very small and weak beginnings. But what limit is there to the grandeur of that "Here am I" with which a man responds to the demand of duties infinitely hard ; to the splendor of that self-forgetfulness which could inspire the miner in his bucket, rushing down to horrible death, to cry out, "Stand from under !" or the egg-gatherer of the Orkneys to cut the rope between him and his son above him, so giving himself over to destruction, if haply he might

save for wife and babes the younger life with so much more to leave? I do not know of any theory of morals that does not stand abashed and silent in the presence of these wonders of self-sacrifice. That must be a highly transcendental sort of utilitarianism, very different from Bentham's or Paley's, which can find a place for them among the illustrations of its theory. Whatever be the law which they obey, the result is simply infinite—immeasurable in its grandeur and significance.

The moral life is infinite again *in its inclusiveness*. There are those who would keep it open on the under side to every form of baseness and impurity, and shut it off upon the upper side from the exalted virtue of a supernatural Jesus. He was so good, they say, he must have been a god, or something more than human. But if there is a limit of attainment which, once reached and passed, a man ceases to be a man, surely there ought to be a limit below which a man should cease to be a man. I protest it is not fair that humanity should be open on the under side to all the possibilities of wickedness, and only closed upon the upper side to all the highest possibilities of virtue. Surely there is no such moral gulf between Jesus and the noblest of acknowledged men as there is between these men and the most degraded of mankind. And therefore I protest, in the name of all that is sensible and just, if baseness does not disfranchise, no more should goodness, be it ever so exalted. If Nero and Caligula stay in, so help us God, Jesus

shall not go out. It is the very skepticism of belief that would exclude him. The so-called infidels believe that human righteousness is infinite; that there is no imaginable or possible perfection which can take a man out of the human order. "The highest is the measure of the man," as Tennyson has written. "The measure of a man," says the Apocalypse—"that is, of the angel." "Thou hast made him but little lower than God,"* the Psalmist says; "thou hast crowned him with glory and honor."

Again, the life of man is infinite upon the side of love—the love of mothers for their children, of wives and husbands for each other, of youths and maidens in their golden prime, of friend for friend, of patriots for their country, of the philanthropist for all who wear the semblance of humanity. It may be that already our scientific people have done something in the way of finding out the laws which master all of this supreme development of human life; and doubtless if omniscience were *our* foible, as it was Macaulay's, we should discover that the best and greatest of all this development is just as much the illustration of invariable law as the movement of the planets in their orbits, or of a rain-drop born of some virgin cloud upon the mountain's side, upon its way to hear the multitudinous laughter of the sea. But what is all that has yet been discovered, what is all that ever will be, so long as there are youths and maidens, men and women, mothers and babies in the world, compared

* The correct translation,

with the divine, ineffable, infinite joy of lovers' hearts—lovers who have just found each other out, or, better still, lovers who have children and grandchildren playing about their knees—compared with the eternal facts of filial and parental tenderness, compared with the delight you have in him you dare to call your friend, compared with the love of a Milton or a Dante for his country—a passion for her purity and holiness—compared with the love of Samuel Howe for men and women imprisoned behind sightless eyes, of John Brown for the slave, of Mary Carpenter and Octavia Hill, remembering those whom God seems to have forgotten—seems, but has not, else whence these incarnations of his tenderness ?

The infinite life of man ! Infinite not only in its faculties of knowing, admiring, serving, and loving, but also in the source of its supplies. What limit is there to the elements that have contributed to the formation of any individual life ? Going back half a dozen generations, we have sixty-four streams of individual life reporting themselves in the organism of the new-born child ; the sixty-fourth, perhaps, thanks to the law of reversion (the same which sometimes gives the horse a zebra stripe across a hundred generations), reporting itself as fully as the fifth or sixth remove. Go back another generation, and you have one hundred and twenty-eight ancestral streams converging ; another, and you have two hundred and fifty-six. How far would you have to go back, at this rate, before you reached a

practical infinitude? Not to the Norman conquest; much less to the beginning of the Christian era. Since Magna Charta, we have had a million ancestors apiece. But of all these ancestors there is not one who has not a word to say about each blithe new-comer, some influence to impress upon him, it may be for good and it may be for evil. And being influenced by all of these, the new-born soul is influenced by all that influenced them—the natural sights and sounds, the turbid passions, or the homely joys of their companions, the wars and rumors of wars, the superstitions and fanaticisms, the heroisms and fidelities that made dark or beautiful their day. Add to this vast inheritance the million-fold environment of every dawning life. What limit to the influences of nature, books, and men that have been registered upon our bodies, minds, and hearts since first we started out upon our earthly pilgrimage! And still we do but dally in the outer temple of the fact, which is that we are children of the universe; that this in its entirety reports itself in us. Vary the *not-me* by a hair's-breadth, and the *me* would not be what it is. If then the universe is infinite, we are not less so. Tyndall is charged with being a materialist, but he declares that mind is not evolved out of mere inorganic matter, but out of the universe as a whole. "I and my Father are one," said Jesus; and our latest science has confirmed that daring intuition; has justified that "jubilee of sublime emotion." I and *my* Father are one; not in coextensiveness or consubstantiality, but in in-

dissoluble unity ; in virtue of that relation of the individual to the All, whereby the All reports itself completely in the make of every breathing soul.

Last, but not least, the life of man is infinite in the outgoings of its influence for evil or for good.

“ Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor’s creed hath lent.”

That is a far-reaching story of the man who had the fleetest horse in Mecca, and another man fell into envy of him, and coveted the horse with uncontrollable desire, and because the owner would not sell it went and lay down upon the desert sands and pretended to be wounded unto death, so that when the man who had the horse he coveted came along, he had compassion on him, and set him in his place, when suddenly the villain struck his spurs into the horse, and shouted back, “ Did I not tell thee I would have him ? ” “ Well, keep him,” said the other ; “ but for Allah’s sake tell no one how thou camest by him ; for it might be that some one who had heard of it, coming along, might find a man as thou didst seem to be, and thinking him another such as thou, he might pass on and leave him to perish.” It is a far-reaching story, as I said. Let us beware lest by our meanness or our treachery we steel the hearts of men against our betters. There is no limit to the influence of our good or evil actions. The blessing or the curse which they entail may fall upon some man of the antipodes. And as the remotest generations of

the past tell upon us, so shall we tell upon the remotest generations of the future. Yes, though we have no children of our own, we are included in the social organism ; and this is sure of immortality, and we in it for better or for worse till time shall be no more. It is a solemn thought, one that may well compel us to bestir ourselves in every noble way, if haply that infinite influence which proceeds from us may be an influence for good and not for evil.

“ Oh, may we join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead, who live again
In minds made better by their presence !

“ So to live is heaven ;
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order, that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.

“ This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May we reach
That purest heaven ! be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony ;
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love ;
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty ;
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused ;
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall we join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.”

THE END.

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